



Minister's Manual

Australian National Office
185 Frederick Rd, Seaton
SA 5023, Australia
P +618 8356 6999
F +618 8235 1891
ABN 84 537 473 256
crcchurches.org.au



Australian National Office
185 Frederick Rd, Seaton
SA 5023, Australia
P +618 8356 6999
F +618 8235 1891
ABN 84 537 473 256
crcchurches.org.au

October 2005

Dear Pastor,

I'm pleased to be able to forward to you your personal copy of the CRC Churches International Minister's Manual.

It is evident that Jesus, in His ministry, considered it essential that He increase in favour both with God and man (Luke 2:52). In our current age there is a proliferation of regulations and laws that affect us, whether we are aware of them or not. At times it is often difficult to understand the intricacies of how these statutes relate to us as Ministers of the Gospel. Yet this doesn't absolve us of the responsibility of being informed and conforming to the "Laws of the Land".

This Minister's Manual is a work in progress. It is obviously fluid to meet the ever changing nature of our Australian Laws, and it is also changing because we are learning "how to interpret these laws in the context of Christian Ministry".

It is our hope that this manual will be a help to you. It's probably not something you'll sit next to the bed for light night time reading, but we do hope it will be a practical book you can refer to. It contains the CRC Charter and National and State Constitutions.

It also contains some "policy" documents: documents that we've developed in recent years to give Ministers guidelines on such issues as "Sexual Harassment", "Divorce and Remarriage" and "Discipline and Restoration of Ministers". As we develop a "policy" of other such issues, these will also be included.

We trust that you will find this manual useful and an asset as you perform your duties as a Credentialed Minister within the CRC Churches International.

In His service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Vasilakis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Bill" and "Vasilakis" being the most distinct parts.

Pastor Bill Vasilakis
Australian National Chairman – CRC Churches International

MINISTRY MANUAL CONTENTS

1. Pastor's Details Form (*added October 2005*)
2. Use of CRC Logo (*updated May 2015*)
3. CRC Website (*updated May 2015*)
4. CRC Declaration of Faith (*added April 2018*)
5. Charter of CRC Churches International (*update September 2010*)
6. CRC Churches National Constitution (*updated October 2015*)
7. Links to Current CRC State Constitutions (*updated October 2015*)
8. Ministry Guidelines (*updated April 2017*)
9. Pathways to Credentialing (*updated April 2017*)
10. Salary & Employment Guidelines (*added April 2017- email National Administrator for most recent salary calculations. These are updated every two years*)
11. Statement on Sexual Harassment (*updated April 2017*)
12. Women in Ministry Guidelines added (*added March 1997*)
13. Guidelines on Discipline and Restoration of Ministers (*updated June 2017*)
14. A Statement on Divorce & Remarriage (*updated May 2017*)
15. Duty of Care and Child Protection Guidelines (*added October 2014*)
16. Three steps to CRC Credentialed Minister Duty of Care Compliance (*updated April 2017*)
17. The Role and Authority of Senior Ministers and Church Eldership Boards (*added May 2003*)
18. CRC Privacy Guidelines (*added May 2003*)
19. Local Church Delegate Guidelines (*updated April 2018*)
20. Local Church Delegate Nomination and Referee Forms (*added September 2005*)
21. Delegate details for CRC Directory (*updated April 2018*)
22. Marriage Rites of the CRC (*added May 1997*)
23. CRC Family Church Member Guide (*updated April 2018*)
24. Church Affiliation Application Form (*added October 2005*)
25. CRC Ministry Code of Ethics (*updated April 2018*)
26. CRC Minister Social Media Policy (*added November 2016*)
27. Lead Pastor Inauguration Vow (*added February 2016*)

Details for Directory.



The details that appear in the directory will be based on the information in this form.
If any details change please complete this form and advise the CRC National Office

Please email this form to crc@crcchurches.org

or by post to:

CRC Churches International
185 Frederick Road, Seaton, SA, 5023

SURNAME:	
FIRST NAME:	
TITLE:	Pr
CHURCH:	
SENIOR MINISTER:	
BIRTH DATE:	
SPOUSE FIRST NAME:	
SPOUSE TITLE:	
SPOUSE BIRTH DATE:	
WORK PHONE NO:	
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:	
RESIDENTIAL SUBURB/TOWN:	
STATE:	
POSTCODE:	
RESIDENTIAL PHONE NO:	
MOBILE PHONE NO:	
SPOUSE MOBILE:	
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	
POSTAL ADDRESS:	
POSTAL SUBURB/TOWN:	
STATE:	
POSTCODE:	
CREDENTIAL HELD:	
RETIRED:	YES/NO
Date First Credentialled:	



Australian National Office
185 Frederick Rd, Seaton
SA 5023, Australia
P +618 8356 6999
F +618 8235 1891
ABN 84 537 473 256
crcchurches.org.au

Specifications for use of the logo of CRC Churches International

The logo shown above is Copyright © 2012 National Council of the CRC Churches International and may only be used with permission.

Administration of use of the logo is conducted on behalf of the National Council by the Australian Office of CRC Churches International, 185 Frederick Road Seaton SA 5023.

Permission to use the logo on letterheads and office stationery, newsletters and promotion material is granted to all CRC Churches provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The logo may only be used by churches that are affiliated with CRC Churches International as defined by the constitutions of the State Councils of the Christian Revival Crusade.
2. The logo may be used on stationery, handbills, tracts and documents.
3. No alteration to aspect, dimensions or font typeface is permitted.
4. On stationery, the logo is situated at the top of the page.
5. On newsletters, handbills and tracts etc., the logo must be no less than 20 by 21mm.
6. On signage, the logo must be of a size that clearly identifies a connection with the CRC when seen from a reasonable distance.

Permission to use the logo electronically in Internet web pages is also granted to affiliated CRC churches as defined above. Only the logo supplied by the National Office of CRC Churches International Australia without alteration to colours, size, dimensions or fonts may be used.

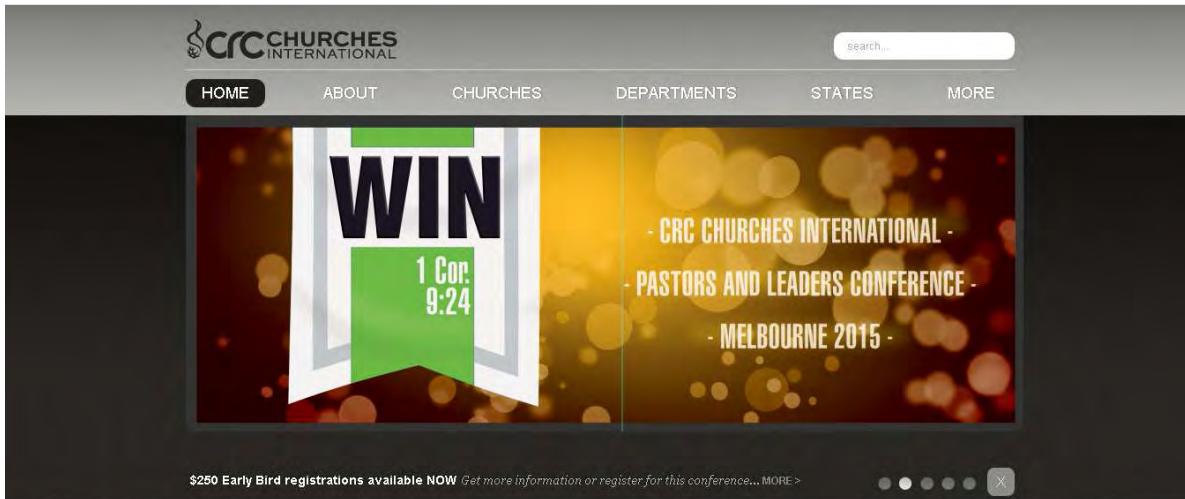
Any other use of the logo is a breach of copyright.

The logo is available from:

National Office
CRC Churches International Australia
185 Frederick Road
Seaton SA 5023
Tel: (08) 8356 6999
Fax: (08) 8235 1891
E. peterg@familycentre.org.au

USING THE CRC CHURCHES WEBSITE

www.crcchurches.org



Introduction:

The CRC Website has been established to provide a public face of our movement to people around the world through which we can showcase the ministry of our churches, and also to provide information to CRC Pastors, leaders and church members.

The website has two access levels. When you first log onto the site you will see what is accessible to "public". This page displays what the public is able to access. The website is continually being updated with new posts, information and resources.

Across the top of the page there are a series of menus that provide details about various aspects of our movement. These include;

HOME – this will return you to the opening page at any time

ABOUT – this provides information about the CRC Churches Movement. Here you can access our Charter, Vision and Mission Statements, Strategic documents and the such like.

CHURCHES – this shows every church in Australia, plus our key churches around the world as an icon on a map. Any icon can be clicked on to view information about the particular church, and link directly to that church's website

DEPARTMENTS – this section links directly into the different departments of the CRC, such as Church planting, Missions, Evangelism, Kids, Youth etc. where you will be able to find specific information about what's happening and what's being planned in these areas.

STATES – this menu gives access to the individual State Council pages, which provides information about State events, training programs, calendars and programs.

MORE – this button opens up an additional menu with a plethora of additional options. Some that may be of interest are:

- Pastoral Positions Vacant ... current open position in the CRC
- CRC Document Library ... the place to download all our CRC documents and resources

- SHOP ... to purchase books or video online
- CONNECT – Member Log In ... here is where you can gain access to our online forums and chat rooms. To do this you will need to have a username and password. If you have not been given one of these, then contact Peter Gillard via peterg@familycentre.org.au to have this organised.



On the main page in the left hand side column there are some additional options;

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Groups - | If you have logged in using your username and password then this will allow access to online forums and chat rooms. |
| SHOP - | The icon links to the CRC Online Shop ... your one stop shop for all CRC resources |
| TRAINING - | The link to the CRC Training site with information adn access to courses |
| SUBSCRIBE - | Will allow you to subscribe if you are not already a member |
| NEW HERE - | Will allow you to set up to see posts of particular interest to you ... such as for your state or country. |
| CALENDAR - | The link to the Google calendar with all the CRC dates included. For example ... find out when the National conference will be next year? |

In the right hand column there is information for everyone to see in the form of current posts according to the date they occurred. This will include updates from recent conferences and gatherings as well as videos from some of our CRC missions projects.

At the bottom of the page there is another menu which will give access to the same pages as the MORE menu at the top of the page.

If you experience any problems with the CRC website, or have ideas about improvements that could be made, contact Peter at the CRC National Office (peterg@familycentre.org.au, 08 8356 6999)

Declaration of Faith

Of CRC Churches International

DECLARATION OF FAITH

The CRC Churches International believes in and presents the following basic truths:

1. The Canonical Scriptures

The Scriptures, as originally written, are infallible and inspired by God. They alone constitute the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to Christian faith and practice.

They are not to be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition or supposed revelation; and because the Bible is the completed revelation of God,

Whatever is not contained therein is not to be declared as an article of faith.

Matthew 4:4; 5:17-18; 24:35; John 5:39; 10:35; 17:17; Acts 28:23; 1 Corinthians 2:7-16; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

2. The Godhead

There is one God, perfect and holy, existing eternally in the three Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible.

These three distinct persons are co-equal and co-eternal in every respect, though each person of the Godhead possesses His own characteristics, and each performs His own specific divine works in total unity and harmony with the others.

Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; 4:4-6

3. God the Father

God the Father is the first Person of the triune Godhead. He has always been the Father from all eternity. As the eternal Spirit, He is personal, ever-present, sovereign, self-existent, invisible, immortal, holy, unchanging, good, merciful, all-powerful, all-knowing, loving, gracious, faithful and just.

God gave His son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28; John 3:36; Matthew 6:13; 19:26; Hebrews 12:7ff; 1 John 1:3; Revelation 4:11; Leviticus 11:44; 20:26; Acts 17:27-28; Genesis 17:1; 18:14; 21:33; Mark 14:36; Luke 1:37; 18:27; John 4:24; Colossians 1:15; Malachi 3:6; Numbers 23:19; Exodus 3:6, 13-14; Deuteronomy 4:39; Daniel 4:35; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Psalms 5:4-5; 25:8; 89:26,28; 90:2; 102:25-27; 103:13; 107:1; 139:1-12; Isaiah 40:25, 28; 46:9-10; 57:15; 63:11-16; Romans 2:4; 8:28; 12:1

4. Jesus Christ the Son

Jesus Christ the Son is the second Person of the triune Godhead.

He is the eternal Son of God. He is the Lord of all creation. He was pre-existent before He came to earth and is pre-eminent above all things.

He was the Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and perfect in nature, teaching and obedience. He was truly God and truly man.

He lived a sinless life and died on a cross as a vicarious sacrifice, shedding His precious blood for the remission of sin for all mankind. He is the only Saviour for the sins of the world.

He rose from the dead in His own glorified body for man's justification, ascended into heaven and will personally return in glory to establish His kingdom on earth.

He is the Head of His body, the Church, and Victor over all the powers of darkness. He now reigns at the right hand of the Father.

John 1:1-3; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:18-25; John 14:9; 17:1,5; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 7:23-28; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:30; Acts 10:36; Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:1,18; Acts 13:39; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22

5. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the triune Godhead.

He is a divine Person, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

He is the Giver of life. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He unites man to Jesus Christ in faith and brings about the new birth. He dwells within the regenerate, producing in them the fruit of the Spirit and enabling them to grow in sanctification.

The Holy Spirit inspired prophets, priests, judges and kings, anointed Jesus Christ for His ministry, filled the Church with Pentecostal power, and quickens the mortal bodies of believers to the service of God.

John 14:16-17,26; 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 1 Peter 1:2, 10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Luke 4:1, 18-21; Acts 2:4; 4:31

6. Man

God created man in His own image and likeness by a specific act of creation.

Though man was originally morally upright and perfect, he fell by voluntary transgression through the original sin of Adam and Eve. Consequently, all mankind is separated from God and his original state of righteousness, and is totally incapable by himself of returning to God. Fallen man, whatever his character or attainment, is lost and without hope apart from the salvation available in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 5:12, 16-17; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12; John 6:44; John 3:3-7; Acts 4:12; 2 Corinthians 11:3

7. The Devil

The devil is a fallen angel who by his influence brought about the downfall of man, and now as the god of this world seeks to destroy humanity. Every believer has access to absolute authority in Jesus Christ over all the power of the devil because Christ's substitutionary death has stripped the devil of his power and authority.

The devil and his evil spirits will be consigned to eternal punishment at the judgment.

Genesis 3:1-5; Matthew 25:41; Luke 10:18-19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-12; Colossians 2:16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9, 11-12; 20:10

8. Salvation

Salvation is solely by grace and is received through genuine repentance toward God, and wholehearted trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also known as the "new birth", and is an instantaneous and complete operation of the Holy Spirit, whereupon the believing sinner is justified, regenerated, sanctified, given eternal life, adopted into the family of God and becomes a new creation in Jesus Christ.

There is no other means by which mankind may be saved, except through the salvation provided by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Through Christ's great redemptive act there is forgiveness of sin, liberation from bondage to the world, and freedom in His Spirit.

Salvation produces an upright and moral life.

Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1; Acts 2:38; 3:19-21; 4:12; 13:31; Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 1:5,7; Galatians 6:14-15; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 3:17

9. The Church

The church comprises all "born again" believers of all nations and denominations, under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The primary task of the Church is to teach all nations and to make disciples, bringing the Gospel to bear on every aspect of life.

The church expresses itself in the world through local congregations which gather for worship.

The primary mission of the church is the redemption of the lost.

Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:27ff; Ephesians 5:23, 26-27; 2:22; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Titus 2:14; Matthew 28:19-20

10. The Ordinances

There are two perpetual ordinances ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ for all Christians, which equally proclaim His death, burial and resurrection.

When

the preaching of the Word conveys the real meaning inherent in these ordinances, and faith is aroused in the recipients, then the Holy Spirit produces great benefits.

Romans 8:11; 10:17

10.1. Believers' Baptism

The believer is baptised by immersion in water upon profession of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism is an integral part of Christian initiation, but not essential for salvation.

It symbolises identification of the believer with Christ's death, burial and resurrection; separation from the old way of life unto the Lord; and the newness of life now available in Christ.

Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:12-13, 36-39; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15; 18:8; 19:4-5; 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:20-21

10.2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a meeting of believers in which bread and wine, symbolising His body and blood, are shared in remembrance of Christ's death, in proclamation of His presence, and in anticipation of His Second Coming.

It speaks of the new and eternal covenant made by God with man, and is sealed with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

This ordinance should be celebrated regularly by all genuine believers, for it reminds the believer that Christ has provided for his every need, and that at the appointed time Christ is coming for His Church.

Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:20-26

11. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is distinct from the "new birth", and is accompanied by speaking in other tongues as the initial evidence, as the Holy Spirit gives utterance. This gracious and supernatural gift of power was not only for the early disciples, but is a gift available to all believers of every generation. It is received by faith.

It endows believers with power to be effective witnesses for Christ, and gives them access to the nine supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8; 2:1-40; 8:15-19; 10:44-47; 19:1-7; Luke 11:13

12. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The various supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues are an integral part of the worship and ministry of the Church.

The gifts are primarily to edify and equip the Church for ministry, and should be in harmony with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and are exercised through the believer by faith.

1 Corinthians 12ff; Romans 15:19; Hebrews 2:4; Acts 3:4-7; 5:3; 11:28-30; 13:9-11; 16:18; 27:10, 22-25; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 13:1-2

13. The Fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control, characterise the life of the true believer and the true ministry of the Church. Such fruit is the natural result of the life of the Spirit in the believer.

Galatians 5:22-26; Colossians 3:12ff; 12:9ff; 1 Corinthians 13:1ff; John 15:1ff

14. Divine Healing

The Bible contains a healing covenant affirmed in both Testaments, providing spiritual and physical health and well-being for the whole person, and divine deliverance from all bondage to the power of Satan. The basis of this covenant for every believer is reconciliation through the atonement of Jesus Christ, which provides the means by which the whole man, spirit, soul and body, may be delivered from the power and effects of sin, sickness and disease. Jesus Christ gave His disciples authority and power to heal all kinds of sickness and disease, and to minister deliverance to those bound by demonic power.

We believe that divine healing and divine deliverance are available to all, through faith in the redemptive death and victorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Exodus 15:26; Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:21-24; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; James 5:14-16; Mark 16:17-18; Matthew 10:1

15. Prayer

Prayer is communion with God by which the believer can offer supplication, intercession and thanksgiving. It is the right and privilege of every believer to speak the word of faith, to pray with authority and so release the transforming power of God.

Through prayer, the believer can communicate with God and receive comfort, guidance, reassurance, encouragement, direction and edification.

Psalm 100:4; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:7-8, 11; 21-22; John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6-7; James 1:5-6; 1 John 5:14-15; John 4:24; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:14-15; Jude 20

16. The Resurrection

There will be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection into eternal life and immortality; for the latter, a resurrection into judgment.

We believe in the eternal punishment of people who wilfully reject and despise the love of God manifested in the great sacrifice of His Son upon the cross for their salvation.

Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3, 13; John 5:28-29; 6:39-40; 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15; Philippians 3:21

17. Prophecy

It is generally accepted that Bible Prophecy has been progressively fulfilled during the course of history and that the Church age will be brought to a close by a series of prophesied events such as the Battle of Armageddon and culminate in the visible, personal and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be associated with the first resurrection, the translation of those alive in Christ, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the binding of satanic powers, the establishment of Christ's millennial reign, after which period the second resurrection and Great White Throne Judgment will take place.

Ezekiel 38; 39; Joel 2; 3; Zechariah 14:1-20; Matthew 24:29-44; Mark 13:24-37; Luke 21:24-36; Acts 1:11; 2:17-21; 2 Peter 3:1-14; Revelation 16:12-16; 20:1-15

CHARTER

OF CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

1. PREAMBLE

The CRC Churches International has been raised up by God as a fellowship of local churches and ministers with a purposeful spiritual vision, mission, ministry and set of shared core values. These succinctly expressed statements reveal our deeply held beliefs and underpin and guide all of our various activities.

Our movement (previously known as the National Revival Crusade 1945-1952; Commonwealth Revival Crusade 1952-1963; and Christian Revival Crusade 1963-1998) began during World War II, offering hope to our Nation whose very existence was being threatened. It was birthed with a passion to reach lost people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to crusade for a national Christian revival with a unique Australian approach to ministry. In this Charter we state those convictions that give this Movement its distinctive and identifying features. The principles expressed in the Charter are the basis for affiliation with, and continuing fellowship in, CRC Churches International.

In the mid 1980s it was recognized that the CRC, which commenced in Australia and New Zealand in the 1940s, became an inter-connected International Movement with Papua New Guinea being its largest constituent member. In the 1990s CRC Churches International was operating in the Philippines, China, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Sri Lanka. With the continuing expansion of the CRC into numerous nations throughout the world, it is anticipated that other national CRC Movements will be invited to join this Association of CRC National Churches.

2. TRIBUTE TO FOUNDER

Recognition is given, and tribute is made, to Pastor Leo Cecil Harris, who through his unique abilities and apostolic ministry was used by God to establish and give leadership to this fellowship of churches in 1945. He was recognised as President of the fellowship until his decease on the 24th September, 1977.

3. OUR VISION AND MISSION

3.1 Our **vision** is to help expand the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth by creating Bible-based contemporary local churches and ministries (Acts 1:8).

3.2 Our **mission** is to exalt Jesus Christ in all that we think, say and do, and to extend His influence throughout the world by:

- Proclaiming Christ's Gospel with the expectation that supernatural signs will follow as the normal New Testament pattern (Mark 16:15-20);
- Planting Christ-centred churches that are autonomous, interdependent and self-propagating (Acts 14:21-28);
- Promoting Christ-glorifying Christian communities which outwork the miraculous and character transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:42-47*);
- Producing Christ-following disciples who seek to obey the Great Commandment and Great Commission (*Matthew 22:36-40; 28:18-20*).

4. OUR CORE VALUES

4.1 WORD BASED

We believe that God will work through His living, authoritative and relevant Bible.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that all our theology, ministry practices and organisational policies and processes are Biblically based;
- Continually reforming ourselves, our local churches and our movement by aligning ourselves to God's Word.

4.2 MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

We believe in the God-inspired multiplication strategy of covering the earth with churches.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring our churches are autonomous and interdependent for the purpose of reproducing new churches;
- Continually releasing our people to outwork the Great Commission blueprint for New Testament revival as mandated by Jesus.

4.3 INTERDEPENDENT MINISTRIES

We believe in connected, cooperative and accountable ministers and churches.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring our church leadership teams avoid the extremes of both independence and dependence, through responsible and accountable practices;
- Continually looking to Jesus as the Head of the church, to call and anoint the right men and women to lead the churches of our movement.

4.4 NEW CREATION MESSAGE

We believe in the liberating power of the New Creation Message that secures and strengthens our foundations in Christ.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we teach “rest” in the finished work of Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection on our behalf, and in the reality of Christ in us through the person of the Holy Spirit;
- Continually enforcing our authority in Christ and appropriating all the privileges we now possess as members of God’s Family.

4.5 GOSPEL OF GRACE

We believe in a Gospel-centred and grace-pervading Christian message that must never be added to or changed.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we maintain our abiding conviction that Jesus Christ can save and transform anyone who places their full trust in Him;
- Continually embracing repentance and obedience as integral aspects of our response to God’s grace.

4.6 STABLE SPIRITUALITY

We believe in a balance between the ‘Word’ and the ‘Spirit’ as we express our dependence on Jesus Christ.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we equally value the Word of God and the Spirit of God as absolutely essential for the growth and stability of all believers, ministers and churches;
- Continually assessing that works attributed to the Holy Spirit align with the inspired Word of God.

4.7 CONTEMPORARY MINISTRY

We believe that our churches should be creative and culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we prayerfully and wisely adapt and change our worship modes, outreach methods and organisational processes;
- Continually monitoring that we maintain our Biblical beliefs and principles as we effectively relate to our constantly changing society.

4.8 HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

We believe in pursuing unity and walking in love in our churches and amongst our ministers.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that integrity and right relationships are paramount, so we can experience the Godly power and spiritual synergy of dedicated teams;
- Continually working at love and unity, doing all in our power to strengthen and develop the ties that bind us together.

4.9 DYNAMIC FAITH

We believe in a forward-moving and daring faith that undergirds everything we do for Jesus Christ.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we move in a faith realm that prays, believes and acts according to the Holy Spirit's confirmed leading;
- Continually affirming that faith is the means by which our potential authority in Christ is outworked in real spiritual power.

4.10 SELFLESS SERVICE

We believe in the call and cost of Christ-appointed ministers who willingly embrace sacrificial servant-hood as a way of life.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that CRC Ministers know the depth of spiritual passion that comes from an authentic call of God;
- Continually encouraging people to value the cost of being a servant of Jesus, resisting the temptation to desire a crown without a cross.

5. OUR MINISTRY FOCUS

5.1. DYNAMIC CHURCHES

We will resource our churches and their leadership teams to grow, be healthy and reach their God-given potential.

5.2. CHURCH PLANTING

We will align ourselves with Christ's master-plan for world evangelisation by Spirit-led church planting.

5.3. MINISTRY TRAINING

We will provide Christian education for all age groups and work towards releasing the divinely bestowed ministry-gifts of Christ into full operation within the church.

We will facilitate the identification of new ministers, invest in their training, entrust them with ministry opportunities and release them to fulfil their God-given call.

5.4. WORLD MISSIONS

We will embrace Jesus' Great Commission as our first priority, accepting the responsibility for developing a world missions vision in our churches. We will support and engage in missionary enterprise in other lands with a view to establishing indigenous local churches and ministry ventures.

5.5. YOUTH AND CHILDREN

We will impact the youngest of our generation for Jesus by inspiring and equipping our churches to have spiritually effective ministries for children and youth.

5.6. EVANGELISM

We will propagate the message of the Word of God and engage in evangelism by all means, such as public meetings, the printed page and the mass media.

5.7. KINGDOM CITIZENS

We will encourage an attitude of Christian fellowship toward all believers in Christ and will honour all civil governing authorities according to the Scriptures.

5.8. FAMILY VALUES

We will uphold marriage as a life-long, monogamous, legally-performed marriage between a man and woman, in which there is constant love, continual care, mutual respect, Godly order, submission and sexual intimacy. We also uphold the family as the basic social unit of society.

6. THE CRC AND THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

We recognise that, within the framework of the Church Universal, there is the necessity to be associated with a group of churches of common faith, values, vision, mission and leadership. The CRC is such a group and believes that association with it should not interfere with our love for, and fellowship with, the Church Universal in whatever contact we may have with it.

7. THE LOCAL CHURCH

We accept the New Testament portrayal of the Church Universal organised into **autonomous, interdependent** and **self-propagating** local churches. Our concept of the local church is that of a loving Christian community that is:

- 7.1. **Autonomous** i.e. self-governing having full authority to manage its own affairs and self-ministering, having sufficient ministry-gifts to lead its congregation according to the Ephesians 4:11-16 pattern;
- 7.2. **Interdependent** i.e. relationally connected, cooperative and accountable to the CRC family;
- 7.3. **Self-propagating** i.e. seeing itself as a base for outreach activities as expressed in the Vision and Mission of the CRC, conducted either on its own local initiative or in cooperation with other local churches;
- 7.4. Governed by Overseers (or by whatever title the spiritual oversight may be known) and served by Deacons or any other such Helpers; and
- 7.5. Composed of people who:
 - 7.5.1 Are saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;
 - 7.5.2 Are baptised in water by immersion;
 - 7.5.3 Ideally are baptised in the Holy Spirit;
 - 7.5.4 Are in submission to the ministry team and spiritual oversight as they shepherd, disciple and lead the local church; and
 - 7.5.5 Hold membership in no other local church.

8. PRINCIPLES OF FELLOWSHIP:

- 8.1. We accept that fellowship finds expression on various levels of life and activity, such as fellowship between people and God; within a local church; between local churches in a group like the CRC; and with the Church Universal on both a personal and local church level.
- 8.2. While recognising that fellowship will be the stronger and more intimate in the smaller and closer circles, we accept that fellowship in all of the above spheres (8.1) can be maintained without conflict of loyalties if a proper sense of priorities is held.
- 8.3. Fellowship is preserved only when privileges are counterbalanced by the following indispensable factors:
 - 8.3.1 Loyalty within our CRC fellowship and to its values, vision, mission and ministry is maintained;
 - 8.3.2 Contribution to our CRC fellowship is made from the resources of each of its members;

- 8.3.3 The discipline of fellowship is accepted, each assuming the responsibilities and restrictions resulting from his/her loyalty to the CRC and its ideals.
- 8.4. We accept that the principles of fellowship are violated when any one member takes independent action knowing that it is contrary and harmful to the interests and desires of the fellowship as a whole, whether in their local church, within our CRC family, or in the Church Universal.

In every case, liberty of action must be limited by consideration of the interests of others within the fellowship.

9. MINISTERIAL POLICY

The following policy is accepted as governing all ministry functioning in and for the CRC.

- 9.1. Only credentialed persons, or those endorsed by the National or State Executives, may officially represent the CRC.
- 9.2. It is expected of such persons that they give due respect to the churches to which they are invited and at all times maintain the highest ideals of Christian fellowship and ministerial and financial ethics. A reciprocal policy by persons visiting CRC churches is expected and appreciated.
- 9.3. CRC platforms are open to all ministers approved by the respective local oversight, subject to the Principles of Fellowship set out in Clause 8.
- 9.4. While CRC churches are encouraged to give generous financial assistance to visiting ministers, such ministers should be requested not to solicit funds, nor to seek names and addresses of members for follow-up purposes, without the approval of the local oversight.
- 9.5. It is expected that visiting ministers will avoid presenting any doctrine, publicly or privately, to any member of a church, knowing that it is contrary to what is normally taught in the church concerned; or to distribute magazines or other literature, audio tapes, videos, cd's, dvd's etc., unless the approval of the recognised oversight of the church is obtained.

10. FINANCIAL ETHICS

- 10.1. Inasmuch as finance plays an important part in the activities of local churches, we accept that the highest possible standard of ethics must be maintained in view of the following considerations:
 - 10.1.1 Responsibility to Jesus Christ as His stewards;
 - 10.1.2 Faithfulness to the people who have entrusted their offerings;
 - 10.1.3 A good testimony before the community as a whole;
- 10.2. In practically outworking this principle, and to ensure we are beyond reproach in this area, it is expected that:
 - 10.2.1 A proper accounting system shall be adopted as required by the civil authorities;
 - 10.2.2 the financial affairs of the local church shall be managed by a responsible officer, or officers who are accountable to the senior governmental authority of their local church;
 - 10.2.3 A balance sheet and a complete financial report shall be furnished each year to the members;
 - 10.2.4 Books of account shall be duly audited each year by a non-member of the church and presented to the members for their endorsement.

11. DECLARATION OF FAITH

The CRC believes in and presents the following basic truths:

- In the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- In God, the Creator, who has revealed Himself in the Persons of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit;
- In the Divinity and sinless Humanity of Jesus Christ, and in His miraculous ministry, His suffering and death on the Cross as the only Saviour for the sins of the world, and His resurrection from the dead;
- That Jesus will return to the earth as its final Judge of the living and the dead;
- That all people fall short of God's perfect standard and can only find forgiveness through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ;
- That all people who have put their faith in Jesus Christ will witness a transformation in their lives, exemplified by repentance and holiness of conduct;

- In Christian Baptism, by full immersion in water, of those who have personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ;
- In regularly celebrating the Lord's Supper, remembering Jesus Christ's saving work;
- In the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the normal initial evidence of speaking in unknown languages;
- In the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- That God heals the sick today through active faith in His grace;
- In the power of prayer;
- In God's community of believers, the church and its responsibility to spread the message of the Gospel to all people and nations.

12. ALTERATIONS TO CHARTER

Alterations, additions to, or repeal of any of the provisions of this Charter shall be made:

- 12.1. By a two-thirds majority of members present; and
- 12.2. At a properly convened meeting with a four tenths quorum of the National Council of the CRC Churches International – Australia Inc; and
- 12.3. After sixty days written notice has been given to all those holding a National Minister's Credential, with details of proposed alterations, etc.

End Document.

CONSTITUTION

CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

Ratified at CRC Churches International Australia National Council Meeting
1st October 2015 at Kingston City Church, Melbourne, Australia.

<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>		Page
1. Preamble		2
2. The Name		2
3. Definitions		2
4. Principles, Objectives and Powers		3
5. Ministers		4
6. State Councils		8
7. National Council		9
8. National Conference		10
9. National Executive		13
10. Duties of National Executive Members		15
11. Marriage, Divorce, Re-marriage and Sexual Conduct		16
12. Disputes		17
13. Other Provisions		17
14. Alterations to the Constitution		18
15. Common Seal		18
Appendix 1 – Procedures for resolving disputes and terminations		19
Appendix 2 – Procedures for appointment of Local Church Delegates		25

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. The CRC Churches International has been raised up by God as a fellowship of local churches and ministers with a purposeful spiritual vision, mission, ministry focus and set of shared core values. These succinctly-expressed statements written into our Charter reveal our deeply-held beliefs and underpin and guide all of our various activities.

Our movement (previously known as the “National Revival Crusade” (1945 - 1952); “Commonwealth Revival Crusade” (1952 -1963); and “Christian Revival Crusade” (1963 -1998)) began during World War II, offering hope to our nation whose very existence was being threatened. It was birthed with a passion to reach lost people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to crusade for a national Christian revival with a unique Australian approach to ministry.

- 1.2. CRC Churches International at national level has expression through a fellowship of local **churches** and **ministers** who are affiliated with recognised CRC Churches International - State Councils, and who work together in co-operative fellowship which is based on mutual love and respect.
- 1.3. Each State Council is required to draw up a Constitution incorporating the requirements of both the Charter and Constitution of CRC Churches International Australia.

2. THE NAME

- 2.1. The name of the Organisation is: "CRC Churches International Australia Incorporated" - also referred to as the "CRC" or "National Council," and its Constitution is hereinafter referred to as the "National Constitution."
- 2.2. Any State Council (refer to clause 6) in affiliation with the National Council shall be required to use the following name style "CRC Churches International (name of State) Incorporated".
- 2.3. The National Council may register the name of CRC Churches International in any State where there is no recognised State Council (subject to legal requirements).

3. DEFINITIONS

In this Constitution, and unless a contrary intention is apparent –

“Act” means the South Australian Associations Incorporation Act 1985.

“Constitution” means the Rules of the Organisation.

“Charter of the CRC Churches International Australia” means the document that sets out the Vision, Mission, Values, Ministry Focus, Ethics and Beliefs of the Organisation.

“Members” means persons holding a National Minister’s Credential, according to clause 5.3.1.4 of this Constitution.

“Membership” means the status of Members.

“Associate Members” means persons holding any of the other credentials specified in clauses 5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.2, 5.3.1.3, 5.3.1.5.

“Associate Membership” means the status of Associate Members.

“Delegate” means a Local Church Delegate with voting rights appointed according to the procedures as set out in Appendix 2 of this Constitution.

“National Council” means the Organisation.

“National Executive” means the Management Committee of the Organisation.

“Annual General Meeting” means the meeting of the Members and Associate Members of the Organisation called according to clause 8.3.2 of this Constitution.

“Financial Year” means the year determined by the National Council as the period over which the finances of the Organisation are recorded, assessed, audited, and submitted for endorsement at the Annual General Meeting.

“National Conference” means the annual gathering of all Members, Associate Members and leaders of local churches for fellowship, discussion, encouragement and promotion of the vision and purposes of the Organisation according to clauses 8.1 and 8.2 of this Constitution.

“State Council” means the CRC Churches International Australia as formed and registered in a state or states of Australia according to clauses 1.3, 6.1 and 6.2 of this Constitution and which is a corporate member of the Organisation.

“Local Church” means a local community of Christian believers who are affiliated with the CRC Churches International Australia according to the requirements of the Charter, the National Constitution, and the relevant State Constitution and which is a corporate member of the Organisation.

“Policy Documents” means the documents approved by the National Council for the Organisation according to clause 4.3.

4 PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES AND POWERS

- 4.1 The National Council exists to represent the CRC in Australia in the promotion of Jesus Christ and to therefore and otherwise facilitate: the training and recognition of ministers relating to the States; the ongoing provision of training opportunities for ministers, leaders and lay people; the maintenance of CRC standards of ethics; the promotion of home and overseas mission in the planting and the recognition of outreach churches and ministries through governing or sponsoring churches; the formal recognition of affiliating churches; the provision of services and departments such as youth and children, etc., to work with churches, regions and State Councils accordingly; the encouragement and recognition of CRC ministry networks and activities, etc. for ministers; the representation of the CRC in other forums including representation on other bodies where there is a common interest such as interdenominational bodies and events; the promotion and support and establishment of other para-church organisations such as Christian schools, bible societies, missions societies, mercy ministries, charitable bodies, etc; and cooperation with secular organisations with a public interest resonating with the Christian cause or ethics; and to therefore raise whatever resources and assets which may be required to sustain the current and future needs of the National Council in whatever capacity it may be able and may so determine in fulfilling these purposes.
- 4.2 The National Council accepts the Vision, Mission, Values, Ministry Focus, Ethics and Beliefs set down in the "Charter of CRC Churches International", (hereinafter referred to as the 'Charter') and the approved policy documents of the Organisation.
- 4.3 The approved policy documents of the Organisation are those documents so designated by resolution in accordance with clause 8.4.1.1 hereof.
- 4.4 From time to time the National Executive may develop documents as guidelines which may be offered and recommended for use by the State Councils, Credential Issuing Authorities or other sub-committees and local churches as

appropriate. These documents collectively will be referred to as "CRC Ministerial Guidelines".

- 4.5. The assets and income of the Organisation shall be applied solely in furtherance of the principles and objectives and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the Organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Organisation.
- 4.6. The National Council shall have all the powers conferred by section 25 of the Associations Incorporation Act 1985 (SA).

5. MINISTERS

5.1. Ministry Gifts

- 5.1.1. The National Council recognises that various Ministry Gifts (i.e., men and women gifted by God who are exercising significant ministries) are given to the Body of Christ to enable it to function effectively.
- 5.1.2. These Ministry Gifts may have various levels of maturity and expression and are duly recognised according to the nature of their function.

5.2. Applications for Credentials, Fees, etc.

The procedures to be followed in applying for ministry recognition, granting of credentials, setting of fees, etc. are defined in the current "CRC Ministerial Guidelines" documents (refer to clause 4.4) of the Organisation as recommended by the National Executive.

5.3. Classification of Ministry

- 5.3.1. The following credentials may be issued to people who are Ministry Gifts within the Organisation:

5.3.1.1. Trainee Minister's Credential

This Credential is issued by the State Council or officers nominated by the State Council and may be issued to those in a training/apprenticeship role, for the purpose of giving official recognition to a person who:

- Fulfils regular pastoral, ministry and platform responsibilities in a local church as a minister in training, or
- Has been given responsibility for an outreach under the auspices of a CRC local church or a State Council, or
- Is pioneering a local church with the objective of it becoming a recognised CRC Churches International Church, or
- Is fulfilling a viable form of ministry and is obviously a developing Ministry Gift.

5.3.1.2. Minister's Credential

This Credential is issued by the State Council or officers nominated by the State Council and may be issued to a person under the auspices of a CRC local church or State Council who is functioning as:

- The Senior Minister of a local church, or
- An Assistant / Associate Minister continuing to perform an effective ministry related to a particular locality.

5.3.1.3. Specialist Minister's Credential

This Credential is issued by the State Council or officers nominated by the State Council and may be issued to a person who is functioning:

- In a specialised area of ministry under the auspices of a CRC local church or a State Council, or
- As an itinerant minister under the auspices of a CRC State Council, or
- As an effective minister, and is not covered by other credential classifications.

5.3.1.4. National Minister's Credential

This Credential is issued by the National Executive on the recommendation of the relevant State Council or officers nominated by the State Council as recognition of a ministry which is esteemed as a Ministry Gift to the Organisation, and which may extend beyond the particular realm or location of service concerned.

5.3.1.5. Affiliated Minister's Credential

This Credential is issued by National Executive on the recommendation of the relevant State Council or officers nominated by the State Council, and may be issued to:

- A minister who is holding (or has recently held) the equivalent of a National Minister's Credential in another movement or denomination and is moving into permanent ministry within the Organisation, or
- A minister who is credentialed with the Organisation, but whose ministry prevents the applicant from being closely involved in a CRC Churches International church or State Council (e.g. working overseas in a field or country where the Organisation is not registered) or,
- A minister in a Para-Church ministry not covered by other categories, or
- A minister of a local church that is considering becoming a:
 - a) Member Church of CRC Churches International Australia
or;
 - b) Church in fellowship with CRC Churches International Australia.

5.3.1.6. Retired Minister's Credential

This Credential is issued by National Executive on the recommendation of the relevant State Council or officers nominated

by the State Council, and may be issued to a person:

- (a) Who has held at least one of the Ministry Credentials defined in clauses 5.3.1.2, 5.3.1.3, 5.3.1.4 or 5.3.1.5 for at least 10 years, and
- (b) Whose involvement at a State and/or National organisational level is no longer appropriate (e.g. due to advanced age or ill health).

In being granted a Retired Minister's Credential, such person would no longer have voting rights nor be included in any quorum requirements at State and National Council meetings and would not be required to pay credential fees.

A Member or Associate Member wishing to be reclassified as a Retired Minister should notify their State Executive; and on their recommendation, the National Executive may process the reclassification. Alternatively, the move for reclassification may be initiated by the National Executive or the relevant State Executive, if they deem that a particular Member or Associate Member is no longer able to fulfil their organisational responsibilities; and in consultation with the Member or Associate Member, make the appropriate decision.

5.3.2. Credential Conditions and Expectations

The conditions and expectations pertaining to each of these classifications are defined in the current "CRC Ministerial Guidelines" documents (refer to clause 4.4) of the Organisation as recommended by the National Executive.

5.3.3. Credentials may be issued to such persons who:

- 5.3.3.1.** Are members of a recognised CRC Churches International church or a local church acceptable to the relevant State Council or a 'Para-Church' organisation acceptable to the relevant State Council.
- 5.3.3.2.** Have the requisite proven natural and spiritual qualifications of an Elder as described in:
 - 1 Timothy 3:1-13
 - Titus 1:5-16
 - 1 Peter 5:1-10

5.3.3.3. Have the following characteristics:

- Demonstrate stability, wisdom and spiritual maturity in their Christian walk;
- Express a Ministry Gift in accordance with Ephesians 4:11 etc.;
- Show integrity, loyalty and commitment to the fellowship and concepts of CRC Churches International.

5.3.3.4. Agree to abide by the requirements of:

- The Charter of CRC Churches International Australia;
- The Constitution of CRC Churches International Australia - National Council;
- The Constitution of CRC Churches International Australia - State

Council, as applicable.

- 5.3.3.5 Adhere to the policy regarding Marriage, Divorce and Re-marriage and sexual conduct in relation to credentials (refer to clause 11).

5.4 Termination of Membership

- 5.4.1 Any Member or Associate Member may, by notice in writing to the National Chairman, terminate their Membership or Associate Membership of the National Council by surrendering their credential, and forfeiting all rights and privileges of persons holding a ministry credential in CRC Churches International. Such termination shall take immediate effect on receipt of the notice by the National Chairman.
- 5.4.2 Additionally, Membership or Associated Membership automatically lapses whenever a person is issued a Retired Minister's Credential.

5.5 Movement of Ministers

When Members or Associate Members propose to re-establish in a new location, then it is expected that such a move should be made in collaboration with:

- The respective State Chairman and any relevant appointed CRC officers.
- The Oversight of each local church which may be affected.

5.6 Forfeiture of Credential

- 5.6.1. Should the Issuing Authority of a credential (as defined in clause 5.3.1) determine that a holder of a credential has violated the basic requirements of Scripture, or this Constitution, or the Charter, in the areas of:

- Use of finance, or
- Ministerial ethics, or
- Personal morality, or
- Doctrine'

then they shall be required to:

- Surrender their credential immediately.
- Resign from leadership of their church immediately.
- Resign from any leadership position held within the Organisation.
- Accept a reasonable period of restoration and rehabilitation as prescribed by the relevant Issuing Authority which has given due consideration to the current "Guidelines on the Discipline and Restoration of Ministers" document of the Organisation.

- 5.6.2. The procedure to be followed by the Issuing Authority in making such a determination, and the right of appeal against this determination, is outlined in Appendix 1, clause 2.

5.7 Suspension of Credential

- 5.7.1 The relevant State Chairman together with the National Chairman shall have the power to suspend ministerial credentials. They may together take such action when they determine that a suspension is

appropriate given the circumstances of the case, and notwithstanding that the person concerned may not at that time have had sufficient opportunity to respond to the allegations.

In the event of a person having their credential suspended, they shall be required to immediately:

- Relinquish and step down from all positions they hold within the Organisation; and
- Cease any active role in their local CRC Churches International church.

Accordingly, the person's leadership duties in the Organisation would also be suspended pending an investigation and judgement thereon by the relevant Issuing Authority.

In this extraordinary eventuality the respective State Executive is to fully consult and work in loving cooperation with the local church Oversight. It is therefore also expected that the State Executive will make provision for ministry and counselling support to be given to the local church, its Oversight and any other aggrieved parties as may be agreed.

- 5.7.2 The procedure to be followed by the State and National Chairmen in making such a determination is outlined in Appendix 1, clause 3.
- 5.7.3 Where the person concerned is the State Chairman or National Chairman then the State Vice-Chairman, or National Vice-Chairman, as appropriate, shall act in the capacity of Chairman and call a special meeting of the National Executive to decide upon the suspension of the Chairman's credential.

6. STATE COUNCILS

6.1. Recognition of a State Council

- 6.1.1. The National Executive may recognise a State Council when it has a membership of at least five persons, each holding a National Minister's Credential, representing no less than five affiliated churches, and when such State body conforms to the requirements of affiliation stated in clause 6.2.
- 6.1.2. If a State Council declines below these figures the National Executive will ensure the duties and responsibilities of the State Council are appropriately managed.

6.2. Affiliation of a State Council

- 6.2.1. State Councils may apply to the National Executive for affiliation with the National Council as corporate members on the basis of their acceptance of the Charter and of the National Constitution.
- 6.2.2. All applications for membership shall be submitted on the application form available from the National Administrator.

- 6.2.3. The National Executive may accept such applications on being satisfied with:
 - The suitability of the (proposed) State Constitution.
 - The capability of personnel to administer the affairs of the State.
- 6.2.4. If a State Council desiring affiliation with the National Council fails to satisfy the above requirements then the National Executive may require such a State Council to work in conjunction with an existing recognised State Council. Such affiliation will be for coordination, liaison and protection and will be subject to review at the National Executive's discretion.

6.3. Constitutional Changes

Any proposed changes to a State Council's Constitution must be submitted to the National Executive for approval.

7. NATIONAL COUNCIL

7.1 Membership of the National Council

- 7.1.1. Membership in CRC Churches International Australia - National Council comes through holding a National Minister's Credential (refer to clause 5.3.1.4.).
- 7.1.2. Associate Membership of the National Council comes through holding any of the other credentials specified in clauses 5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.2, 5.3.1.3, 5.3.1.5. Associate Members do not have voting rights and are ineligible to serve as members of the National Executive. (refer to clause 7.2)

7.2 Voting Rights

- 7.2.1. Members of the National Council (refer to clause 7.1) are eligible to vote and only persons holding a National Minister's Credential can serve as voting members of the National Executive.
- 7.2.2. In addition to the entitlement of clause 7.2.1 each local church may be represented at the National Council through a Local Church Delegate who shall be entitled to one vote. Instructions for the appointment of a Local Church Delegate are prescribed at Appendix 2.

7.3 Authority

The National Council, in accordance with the provisions of the National Constitution, has authority and power to raise finance, to form departments, to purchase, lease or rent properties, to establish trusts or other such entities to achieve its objectives, to manage and dispose of all monies and to make rules and regulations to administer its affairs.

7.4 Quorum

A quorum for a properly convened meeting of the National Council shall comprise four-tenths of the total number of Members who are

resident in Australia.

7.5 Wind-up Arrangements

- 7.5.1 The National Council can be wound up by special resolution at a duly convened meeting upon at least twenty one (21) days notification in writing to Members and Associate Members, specifying the intention to propose such a special resolution. Notice is deemed to have been given if such a notice has been posted or digitally sent to the last known addresses of each Member and Associate Member.
- 7.5.2 The motion will be passed if at the meeting referred to in clause 7.5.1, a three quarters majority of Members and Delegates present vote in favour of the resolution.
- 7.5.3 Should the National Council cease to function as an organisational entity its assets and funds shall be paid or transferred to a charitable institution (selected by the National Executive) having a vision, mission, ministry focus and core values wholly or in part similar to CRC Churches International Australia Inc. No individual Member, Associate Member or their relatives shall be entitled to receive any part thereof.

8. NATIONAL CONFERENCE

- 8.1 A Conference of all Members and Associate Members, together with other recognised leaders of local churches, shall be held annually, and shall be for a minimum duration of three (3) days when all are expected to attend.
- 8.2 The Conference programme shall be arranged by the National Executive and shall be primarily for spiritual fellowship and promotion of vision, giving ample opportunity for discussion, sharing and mutual encouragement.
- 8.3 Annual General Meeting
 - 8.3.1 An Annual General Meeting of all Members and Associate Members shall be held during the Conference for the conduct of National Council business affairs.
 - 8.3.2 (was 5.5) The National Chairman (refer to clause 9.4.6) shall be instructed by the National Executive (refer clause to 10.1.2) to call a properly convened Annual General Meeting of Members and Associate Members of the National Council where formal notice shall be given in writing at least eight (8) weeks prior to the said meeting. Notice is deemed to have been given if such notice has been posted or digitally sent to the last known addresses of each Member and Associate Member.
 - 8.3.3. The following items shall be considered at such a meeting:
 - An audited statement of income and expenditure and balance sheet of that year shall be presented;
 - Reports from the National Chairman, and other designated leaders shall be presented;
 - Appointments shall be made to the National Executive as applicable (refer to clause 8.5);

- Office Bearers shall be appointed in accordance with the requirements of the National Constitution;
- Various recommendations may be made to the National Executive; and,
- Action may be taken regarding other items.

8.4 Voting

8.4.1. Procedures

While it is felt consistent with Scripture that there should be total unity in passing of resolutions and in appointments to office, for the purpose of the National Constitution and unless otherwise stated, the following procedures shall apply.

8.4.1.1.General Business

A motion shall be passed by a simple majority of the voting members and delegates present at the meeting.

8.4.1.2.Appointments to Office

- (a) If two (2) nominations are received, appointment to office shall be by a simple majority of voting members and delegates present.
- (b) In the event of more than two (2) persons being nominated, appointment to office shall be by a preferential system of voting. Each voter shall number their preferences in numerical order. The candidate receiving the lowest total score shall be declared elected.
- (c) In the event of a tied ballot for two (2) candidates there shall be a further ballot in respect to the tied candidates, and the candidate receiving a simple majority of votes shall be declared elected.
- (d) In the event of a tied ballot for more than two (2) candidates there shall be a further ballot in respect to the tied candidates and the preferential system of voting described above shall apply.
- (e) In the event of a further tied ballot or ballots there shall be further ballots as necessary, in accordance with sub-clause (c) or (d) as appropriate.
- (f) All voting for office shall be by secret ballot.

8.4.2 Absentee Votes

All Members and Delegates who, because of bona fide medical reasons, legitimate absence from the country, bereavement, or unavoidable logistical considerations, are unable to attend a meeting at which election of officers is to be held, shall be entitled to an absentee vote for the position of National Chairman, providing that vote is conveyed to the National Administrator in writing together with the reason for absence, at least twenty four (24) hours prior to the commencement of the National Council meeting. No other absentee voting shall be permitted. The eligibility of these absentee votes will be adjudicated jointly by at least two previous National Chairmen still

holding National Minister's Credential and who are presently not in office or standing as a candidate for office. In the event that this prerequisite cannot be met alternative suitable adjudicators will be appointed by the National Administrator.

8.5 Nominations for Office

8.5.1 National Chairman

- All nominations for the office of National Chairman shall be submitted in writing to the National Administrator sixty (60) days prior to any meeting at which election of such officer is to be held.
- Nominations shall be signed by a nominator, two (2) seconders and the nominee.
- Only those persons who are Members shall be eligible to nominate and second; and only those persons who have held a credential with the Organisation for at least ten (10) years, and who have held a National Minister's Credential for at least five (5) years shall be eligible to stand for office. The National Administrator shall advise all Members in writing of the names of those who are properly nominated at least thirty (30) days prior to any meetings at which election to office is held.
- In the event that no nominations are received in the appropriate time, or the nominee(s) withdraw(s), the National Executive shall have the power to re-appoint the incumbent Chairman for a further one (1) year term; or if they are unavailable, the incumbent Vice-Chairman for a one (1) year term as Chairman. If neither person is available the National Executive may appoint one of their current members as National Chairman for one (1) year.

8.5.2 National Vice-Chairman

- All nominations for the office of National Vice-Chairman shall be submitted in writing to the National Administrator sixty (60) days prior to any meetings at which election of such officer is to be held.
- Nominations shall be signed by a nominator, two (2) seconders and the nominee.
- Only those persons who are Members shall be eligible to nominate and second; and only those persons who have held a credential with the Organisation for at least ten (10) years, and who have held a National Minister's Credential for at least five (5) years, shall be eligible to stand for office. The National Administrator shall advise all Members in writing of the names of those who are properly nominated at least thirty (30) days prior to any meetings at which election to office is held.

8.5.3 Other elected Executive Members

- Nominations for elected Executive Committee Members shall be submitted in writing to the National Administrator sixty (60) days prior to any meetings at which the election of such officer is to be held. Nominations shall be signed by a nominator, two (2)

seconders and the nominee.

- Only those persons who are Members shall be eligible to nominate and second; and only those persons who have held a credential with the Organisation for at least five (5) years, and who currently hold a National Minister's Credential shall be eligible to stand for office. The National Administrator shall advise all Members in writing of the names of those who are properly nominated, at least thirty (30) days prior to any meetings at which election to office is held.

9. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

- 9.1. The National Council shall have expression through a National Executive which shall comprise:
 - 9.1.1. The National Chairman elected according to clause 8.5.1.
 - 9.1.2. The National Vice-Chairman elected to office according to clause 8.5.2.
 - 9.1.3. A number of Executive members determined and elected according to clause 8.5.3.
 - 9.1.4. A minimum of seven (7) voting members including the National Chairman and the National Vice-Chairman.
 - 9.1.5. The National Executive can additionally appoint persons to assist them, such as a National Administrator and Executive Secretary, in a non-voting capacity to fulfil specific roles as required.
- 9.2. All persons appointed to this Executive are expected to be in attendance at all properly convened meetings.
- 9.3. A quorum for this Executive shall comprise three-fourths of the total number of voting Executive members.
- 9.4. The National Executive shall:
 - 9.4.1. Serve with the National Chairman to set the spiritual direction and faith goals of the Organisation and ensure that these are compatible with the Organisation's Core Values (refer to Clause 4.1.2 and Charter article 4).
 - 9.4.2. Work with the National Chairman to develop guidelines of operation and specific strategies to achieve the Organisation's Vision, Mission and Ministry focus (refer to Clause 4.1.1, 4.1.3 and Charter articles 3 & 4).
 - 9.4.3. Act as the Credential Issuing Authority for National Ministers, Affiliated Ministers and Retired Ministers.
 - 9.4.4. Implement decisions made by the National Council at its Annual General Meeting (refer to clause 8.3).
 - 9.4.5. Have authority to accept applications for membership with the Organisation by churches and ministers in those States and Territories where there is no State Council.
 - 9.4.6. Organise the National Conference, the Annual General Meeting and other authorised National functions.

- 9.4.7. Meet at least twice a year. Any meeting may be held via video conference, tele-conference or internet conferencing.
- 9.4.8. Ensure that a copy of the minutes of each Annual General Meeting and National Executive Meeting is forwarded to all Members and Associate Members.
- 9.4.9. Have power to appoint such committees as considered desirable to carry out such functions as shall be delegated by the National Council.
- 9.4.10. Appoint a person qualified and registered according to clause 35(2)(b) of the South Australian Associations Incorporation Act 1985, to audit the accounts of the Organisation.
- 9.4.11. Appoint a Public Officer of the Organisation in accordance with the requirements stated in clause 56 of the South Australian Associations Incorporation Act 1985.

9.5. Election of Office Bearers

- 9.5.1. The National Council shall, at an Annual General Meeting, elect:
 - A National Chairman for a term of four (4) years (see clause 8.5.1).
 - A Vice-Chairman and other Executive Members for a term of two (2) years (see clauses 8.5.2, 8.5.3).
 - (a) National Chairman.

Where, for some unforeseen reason, a new National Chairman is elected to office before the full four (4) year term of the previous Chairman is completed, the new Chairman must serve out the remainder of the four (4) year term of service before a new four (4) year term election is held.
 - (b) National Executive.

Where, for unforeseen reason, a National Executive cannot be appointed at the end of the normal two (2) year term, the incumbent Executive shall remain in office until a vote can be taken at the next properly convened meeting of the National Council. In this instance the new Executive would be appointed to function only until the end of the normal biennial elective cycle, i.e., for a period of less than two (2) years.

9.5.2. Inability of National Chairman to serve

Should the Chairman, by reason of death, voluntary resignation or some other incapacity be rendered incapable of carrying out their leadership responsibilities, the Vice-Chairman will become the Acting Chairman. In the event that the Vice-Chairman is unable to serve as Acting National Chairman, the National Executive will meet as soon as practicable to appoint an Acting Chairman from within its own number. A three-fourths majority vote of the voting members present is required.

A properly convened election for the office of National Chairman (who will serve out the remaining time of the current four (4) year election cycle) is to be conducted at the next National Council meeting. The election of a National Chairman to a full four (4) year term of service must be in accordance with clause 9.5.1.

9.5.3. Removal from Office

Further to the procedures of clauses 5.6 and 5.7, the National Executive shall have the power, by a three-fourths majority decision of the voting members present to remove from office and suspend or remove the credential of the National Chairman, any National Executive Member and other CRC officers or Department Heads if they have contravened the requirements specified in clause 5.6.

9.5.4. The National Executive shall have power to appoint interim office bearers and other personnel as required.

9.6 Passing of Resolutions

While it is felt consistent with Scripture that there should be total unity in the passing of resolutions, a motion shall be passed by the National Executive by a simple majority of voting members present.

10. DUTIES OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

10.1. National Chairman

The duties of the National Chairman shall be:

- 10.1.1. To serve the best interests of CRC Churches International as its Senior Officer, by helping the Organisation outwork its Vision, Mission and Ministry focus and stay aligned to its Core Values (refer to clause 4.1 and Charter articles 3, 4, 5).
- 10.1.2. To preside at the National Conference and the National Council Annual General Meeting.
- 10.1.3. To call and chair meetings of the National Executive.
- 10.1.4. To coordinate the duties of Executive members and their leadership contribution.
- 10.1.5. To implement decisions that may be given by the National Executive and National Council.
- 10.1.6. To exercise on a larger scale whatever their ministry and calling enable them to do.
- 10.1.7. To represent the National Council to society in general.
- 10.1.8. To undertake other such duties as may be determined from time to time by the National Executive and National Council.

10.2. National Vice-Chairman

The duties of the National Vice-Chairman shall be:

- 10.2.1. To represent or deputise for the National Chairman where necessary.
- 10.2.2. To assist the National Chairman.
- 10.2.3. To exercise on a larger scale whatever their ministry and calling enable them to do.

10.3. National Administrator

The National Administrator will be responsible for the duties of Secretary/Treasurer which will be determined by the National Executive, and will include:

- 10.3.1. Making and filing true records and minutes of the proceedings of the National Council Annual General Meeting.
- 10.3.2. Acting as Secretary for the National Executive and ensuring that accurate records of the proceedings of all meetings of the said Executive are made, filed and distributed where directed.
- 10.3.3. Issuing the required annual Credentials as detailed under clause 5.3., and maintaining an accurate register of Members and Associate Members.
- 10.3.4. Acting in conjunction with the National Executive, utilise approved methods of banking, drawing, recording and reporting of monies placed in their care, and appoint an auditor to annually audit the accounts.
- 10.3.5. Outworking various other tasks as determined by the National Chairman and Executive.

10.4. Members of the National Executive

The duties of the members of National Executive shall be:

- 10.4.1. To be available to attend meetings and effectively serve on the National Executive as it undertakes its various activities.
- 10.4.2. To exercise general spiritual leadership as the opportunity affords.

11. MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE AND SEXUAL CONDUCT

- 11.1. Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and sexual conduct in relation to Credentials, Local Church Eldership Boards, Ministry Leaders, and Church Members.
 - 11.1.1. The CRC Churches International Australia understands that the Biblical model of marriage is a life-long, monogamous legally-performed marriage between a man and a woman, in which there is constant love, continual care, mutual respect, Godly order, submission and sexual intimacy. In such a context children may be born and raised in an atmosphere of loving care, Godly training and discipline.

In our local churches, subject to issues of care and safety within our congregations, we aim to be inclusive, accepting and welcoming of all people without necessarily affirming certain behaviours.

However the standard of Biblical holiness needs to apply to official church members and leaders. Therefore, any sexual relationship outside of marriage, between a man and a woman (such as adultery, de facto relationships); homosexuality; or any other form of sexual conduct prohibited by Scripture is deemed unacceptable for CRC ministry leaders. Those persons who continue in, or promote as acceptable Christian behaviour such practices, will be disqualified from being an official local church member, ministry leader or eldership board member, and from holding a credential within CRC Churches International Australia.

- 11.1.2. Where an applicant has been divorced, the relevant Credential Issuing Authority needs to carefully consider the principles outlined in the current "Guidelines on Divorce and Remarriage" document of CRC Churches International as recommended by the National Executive.
- 11.1.3. Recognition is also given to the validity of remarriage for a person whose spouse has died or a divorced person who:
Satisfies the requirements of the relevant Issuing Authority which has given due consideration to both the current "Guidelines on Divorce and Remarriage" and "Ministry Guidelines" documents of CRC Churches International as endorsed by the National Executive.

12. DISPUTES

12.1. Disputes between Members and/or Associate Members

- 12.1.1. Ideally all disputes should be resolved on the basis of the following Scriptures:
 - Matthew 18:15-20; Matthew 5:23-26
 - Galatians 6:1-5
- 12.1.2. If this fails then the matter shall be referred to the relevant State Executive (hereinafter referred to as the "State Executive"), which shall make a decision in relation to the matter according to the procedure in Appendix 1, clause 1. Such decision shall be binding upon the parties to the dispute, subject to the right of appeal as outlined in Appendix 1, clause 1.

12.2. Disputes in and between State Councils

If a dispute between groups of Members, Associate Members and/or churches (as distinct from an intra-State dispute that is handled under clause 11.1) is not being successfully resolved by the normal process operating within the State(s), then the National Executive can be called upon to arbitrate and resolve the matter in dispute as outlined in Appendix 1, clause 5.

13. OTHER PROVISIONS

The National Executive, with the endorsement of the National Council, shall have power to:

13. 1. Establish a "Missions Executive" to effectively recognise, assist, support and co-ordinate personnel who are available to serve in both Home and Overseas Missions;
- 13.2. Establish a "Ministry College" to provide an advanced teaching faculty to develop and train prospective ministers, missionaries and other ministries;
- 13.3. Appoint Ministry Leaders who are not credentialed ministers; and establish such other departments, trusts, committees, etc. as it deems necessary to achieve its objects;

- 13.4. Establish a logo to be used by National and State bodies within Australia;
- 13.5. Publish such books, magazines, periodicals, newsletters and other material as are necessary for the spreading of the Gospel and promotion the vision and activities of the Organisation; and appoint editors and commission writers as needed.
- 13.6. Undertake any other ministry initiatives that the National Executive deems consistent with the vision, mission and values of the CRC.

14. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Alterations, additions to, or repeal of any provisions of this Constitution shall be made as follows:

- By a two-thirds majority of all Members and Delegates present at a properly convened meeting of the National Council, the meeting being held in Australia.
- A quorum for such a meeting shall comprise of fourth-tenths of the total number of Members and Delegates resident in Australia.
- Notification of all proposed changes to the Constitution is to be advised to all Members, Delegates and Associate Members at least sixty (60) days before the Annual General Meeting. Notice is deemed to have been given if such notice has been posted, faxed or digitally sent to the last known address of each Member and Associate Member.

or
- By the National Executive providing the same has been approved by resolution of each recognised State Council, having been passed with a majority of not less than two-thirds of those Members present at each State Council meeting.

15. COMMON SEAL

- 15.1. The National Council shall have a Common Seal, which shall be kept by the National Administrator at the Registered Office of the Organisation.
- 15.2. The Common Seal shall not be affixed to any deed or instrument except by resolution of the National Executive. The affixing of the Common Seal shall be attested by the signatures of any two (2) members of the National Executive authorised to do so.
- 15.3. Upon the agreement of the National Executive, those authorised to execute any deed or instrument shall comply with the decision and affix the Common Seal in accordance with clause 15.2 of the National Constitution.

Appendix 1

Procedures for resolving disputes and terminations

1. Disputes between Members and/or Associate Members
 - 1.1. If the matter cannot be settled according to the scriptural basis referred to in clause 11.1.1 of this Constitution then the following procedure shall be adopted by the relevant State Executive (hereinafter referred to as the "State Executive").
 - a) The State Executive shall give thirty (30) days notice in writing that it proposes to consider the matter in dispute, requiring the parties to the dispute to make written submissions concerning the matter, which submissions must be forwarded to the State Executive and the other party, or parties, to the dispute within fourteen (14) days prior to the proposed meeting of the State Executive.
 - b) If the State Executive deems it appropriate it may invite the parties to submit responding written submissions and/or to present oral submissions.
 - c) In the event that there is a dispute as to the material allegations of fact, then the State Executive shall make such inquiries as it deems fit and make findings of fact thereon, provided that the parties shall be given reasonable opportunity to present further evidence, in such a manner as the State Executive shall determine.
 - d) Nothing herein shall require the State Executive to hear oral evidence, or to allow the persons concerned to be represented by legal counsel.
 - e) Nothing herein shall require the State Executive to be bound by the rules of evidence, but the State Executive shall act according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forums.
 - f) The decision of the State Executive shall be recorded in writing and a copy thereof provided to the parties of the dispute.
 - 1.2. Any of the parties to the dispute may appeal to the National Executive whose decision thereon shall be final and binding upon the parties, provided always that the only grounds for such appeal shall be that the decision was arrived at in breach of natural justice or that the decision was manifestly unfair.
 - 1.3. The appeal to the National Executive shall be heard by three (3) persons appointed by the National Chairman (such persons to have each held a National Minister's Credential for not less than ten (10) years). The appeal shall be governed by the following procedure:
 - a) The appeal shall be instituted by giving written notice to the State Executive and to the National Chairman within fourteen (14) days of receiving notice of the decision and shall set out precise particulars of the grounds upon which it is asserted that the decision appealed against was in error.
 - b) The persons hearing the appeal shall make such inquiries as they deem fit in the circumstances, provided always that the State Executive and the parties to the dispute shall have a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions in respect of the matters

raised in the appeal.

c) The decision on the appeal shall be determined by simple majority.

d) In the event that the appeal is allowed, the matter shall be remitted to the State Executive to be determined in accordance with such directions as may be given by those persons who heard the appeal and comprised the majority.

e) If any of the parties to the dispute fails to abide by the decision of the State Executive, or where there has been an appeal, the outcome of that appeal, such person or persons shall be deemed to be in breach of this Constitution and the Charter and shall be liable to disciplinary action which may include the forfeiture of their credential(s).

1.4. In the event that the dispute is between persons who are not affiliated with the same State Council, the matter shall be referred to the National Executive. The National Executive shall appoint a committee, hereinafter referred to as the "Dispute Committee", comprising three (3) persons, (such persons to have each held a National Minister's Credential for not less than ten (10) years); and the Dispute Committee shall make a decision on the matter, which decision shall be binding on the parties to the dispute. The procedure to be followed by the Dispute Committee in making a determination on the matter shall be as specified in clause 1.1 above with appropriate modifications.

1.5. There is no right of appeal once a determination has been made by the Dispute Committee.

2. Forfeiture of Credential

2.1. When the Issuing Authority proposes to consider making a determination on the forfeiture of a credential for any of the reasons given in clause 5.6.1 of the National Constitution, the following procedure shall apply:

a) The person concerned shall be given thirty (30) days notice in writing of the proposal and such written notice shall provide general particulars of the allegations made against them.

b) The person concerned shall have the right to make written submissions responding to the allegations, which written submissions must be forwarded to the Issuing Authority within seven (7) days prior to the proposed meeting.

c) If the Issuing Authority deems it appropriate it may invite the person concerned to present oral submissions.

d) In the event that there is a dispute as to material allegations of fact, then the Issuing Authority may make such inquiries as it deems fit, and may make findings of fact, which findings shall be binding upon the person concerned, provided that they shall be given reasonable notice of the evidence against them and a reasonable opportunity to present evidence on their behalf, in such a manner as the Issuing Authority shall determine.

e) Nothing herein shall require the Issuing Authority to hear oral evidence or to allow the person concerned to be represented by legal counsel.

- f) Nothing herein shall require the Issuing Authority to be bound by the rules of evidence, but the Issuing Authority shall act according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forums.
- 2.2. Should the Issuing Authority make a determination under this clause, the person concerned may appeal against the decision.
- 2.3. An appeal shall be instituted by the person concerned giving written notice to the Issuing Authority within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of the decision, and to the relevant appellant body, provided always that the only grounds for such an appeal shall be that the decision arrived at was in breach of the rules of natural justice and/or that the penalty resulting from the decision was manifestly excessive.
- 2.4. Where the Issuing Authority is the relevant State Council or officers nominated by the State Council, the appeal shall be to the relevant State Council, which appeal shall be decided by three (3) members of that State Council who shall be appointed by the Chairman of the State Executive. In the event that the Issuing Authority is the National Executive then the appeal shall be to the National Executive, and the National Chairman will appoint three (3) members of the National Council to decide upon the appeal. Only those persons who have held a National Minister's Credential for ten (10) years or more, and who were not involved in the making of the decision subject of the appeal, are eligible for appointment.
- 2.5. The body to whom the appeal is made shall determine the appeal within a reasonable time and shall make such inquiries as it deems fit in the circumstances, provided always that the Issuing Authority and the person concerned shall have a reasonable opportunity to make submissions in respect of the appeal, whether written or oral (which the appellant body may determine).
3. Suspension of Credential
- 3.1. When the State and National Chairman decide it is appropriate to suspend a person's credential in accordance with clause 5.7 of this Constitution, the following procedure shall apply:
- a) The relevant State Chairman and National Chairman shall notify the person of the decision to suspend their credential. Suspension is to take effect immediately from the date of notification.
- b) Notification may, in the first instance, be made verbally by the National Chairman. The notification must also be put in writing in a letter signed by both the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman. This notification may be in the form of two letters signed separately by the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman or, in one letter signed jointly by both the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman. **Copies** of the letter(s) of notification are to be forwarded to the relevant State Executive and National Executive members.
- c) The person concerned has no right of appeal against the suspension; however the suspension must be investigated in accordance with clause 5.7 of the Constitution. The suspension must be reviewed by the respective State Executive, in the case of Associate Members or by the National Executive, in the case of a

Members.

- d) Suspension is “temporary” until such time as the matter can be investigated and reviewed by the appropriate Issuing Authority. This review process would normally be completed as soon as possible, preferably within a three (3) month period and generally not more than six (6) months from the date of issue of the suspension. During the period of the suspension the person concerned is to hand in their credential to the State Chairman and loses the right to represent the church, preside at public services, weddings, funerals and committee meetings; or be involved in any of the financial transactions of the church. (e.g. signing cheques, operating credit cards).
- e) After the matter has been investigated the person’s credential must either be forfeited under the provisions of clause 5.7, or a minimum time of a further two (2) years imposed for a period of restoration according to the CRC Guidelines on Discipline and Restoration, or the suspension lifted.
- f) Where the suspension is lifted, this should be notified in writing to the person concerned in a letter jointly signed by the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman.

4. Termination of State Council Affiliation

- 4.1. In the event that the National Executive proposes to consider terminating the affiliation of a State Council as in clause 11.2 of this Constitution the following procedure shall apply:
 - a) The Chairman of the National Executive shall appoint a Special Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Executive Sub-committee), comprising five (5) persons (such persons to have each held a National Minister’s Credential for not less than fifteen (15) years) to investigate the action of the State Council concerned.
 - b) The State Council concerned shall be given thirty (30) days notice in writing of the proposal and such written notice shall provide general particulars of the allegations made against the State Council.
 - c) The State Council concerned shall have the right to make written submissions responding to the allegations, which written submissions must be forwarded to the Executive Sub-committee within seven (7) days prior to the proposed meeting of that Committee.
 - d) Should the Executive Sub-committee deem it appropriate it may invite the State Council concerned to present oral submissions.
 - e) In the event that there is a dispute as to material allegations of fact, then the Executive Sub-committee may make such inquiries as it deems fit, and may make findings of fact, which findings shall be binding upon the State Council concerned, provided that the latter shall be given reasonable notice of the evidence against it and a reasonable opportunity to present evidence on its behalf, in such a manner as the Executive Sub-committee shall determine.
 - f) Nothing herein shall require the Executive Sub-committee to hear oral evidence, or to allow the State Council concerned to be represented by legal counsel.
 - g) Nothing herein shall require the Executive Sub-committee to be

bound by the rules of evidence, but the Executive Sub-committee shall act according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forums.

- h) The findings of the Executive Sub-committee shall be recorded in writing and given to the National Executive, with a copy to the State Council concerned.
- i) The State Council shall then have fourteen (14) days in which to make a written submission to the National Executive concerning the findings or any action that should be taken in relation thereto.
- j) Following receipt of the State Council's submission, or the expiry of the fourteen (14) days from the date of delivery of the Executive Sub-committee's findings to the State Council, the National Executive shall determine the action to be taken against the State Council concerned.
- k) There is no right of appeal against the decision of the National Executive.

5. Disputes in and between State Councils

- 5.1. If the matter of disputes in and between State Councils cannot be resolved between themselves, and the National Executive proposes to consider the matter as in clause 11.2 of this Constitution, the following procedure shall apply:
 - a) The National Executive shall give thirty (30) days notice in writing that it proposes to consider the matter in dispute, requiring the parties to the dispute to make written submissions concerning the matter, which submissions must be forwarded to the National Executive and the other party, or parties, to the dispute within fourteen (14) days prior to the proposed meeting of the National Executive.
 - b) If the National Executive deems it appropriate it may invite the parties to submit responding written submissions and/or to present oral submissions.
 - c) In the event that there is a dispute as to the material allegations of fact, then the National Executive shall make such inquiries as it deems fit and make findings of fact thereon, provided that the parties shall be given reasonable notice of the evidence so gathered and a reasonable opportunity to present further evidence in such a manner as the National Executive shall determine.
 - d) Nothing herein shall require the National Executive to hear oral evidence, or to allow the State Councils concerned to be represented by legal counsel.
 - e) Nothing herein shall require the National Executive to be bound by the rules of evidence, but the National Executive shall act according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forums.
 - f) The decision of the National Executive shall be recorded in writing and a copy thereof provided to the parties of the dispute.

- 5.2. Any of the parties to the dispute may appeal to the National Council through the National Chairman, whose decision thereon shall be final and binding upon the parties, provided always that the only grounds of such appeal shall be that the decision of the National Executive was arrived at in breach of natural justice or that the decision was manifestly unfair.
- a) The appeal to the National Council shall be heard by three (3) persons appointed by the National Chairman (such persons to have each held a National Minister's Credential for not less than fifteen (15) years. Only those persons who were not involved in the making of the decision subject of the appeal are eligible for appointment. The appeal shall be governed by the following procedure:
 - b) The appeal shall be instituted by giving written notice to the National Executive and to the National Chairman within fourteen (14) days of receiving notice of the decision and shall set out precise particulars of the grounds upon which it is asserted that the decision appealed from was in error;
 - c) The persons hearing the appeal shall make such inquiries as they deem fit in the circumstances, provided always that the National Executive and the parties to the dispute shall have a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions in respect of the matters raised in the appeal;
 - d) The appeal shall be determined by 'simple majority.'
 - e) In the event that the appeal is allowed, the matter shall be remitted to the National Executive to be determined in accordance with such directions as may be given by those persons who heard the appeal and comprised the majority;
 - f) If any of the parties to the dispute fails to abide by the decision of the National Executive, or where there has been an appeal, the outcome of the appeal, such party or parties shall be deemed to be in breach of this Constitution and the Charter and shall be liable to disciplinary action which may include the termination of affiliation.

Appendix 2

Procedures for appointment of Local Church Delegates

1. AFFILIATED CHURCHES

- 1.1. The delegate system recognises that our Charter and National Constitution prescribe “that CRC Churches International is a fellowship of local churches and ministers.” A local church, as an entity in itself, will often be represented at National and State Councils by Members or Associate Members from the church, but it is not uncommon for our smaller churches to have no voting members.
- 1.2. For a local church to be eligible for a delegate it must fit within the definition of a local church as defined by the relevant State Constitution.

2. ONE DELEGATE PER CHURCH

- 2.1. The delegate representation provides for each church to have, in addition to any Members or Associate Members from the church, one representative at both State and National Council meetings.
- 2.2. A Local Church Delegate will have full voting rights at our National and State Council meetings without being an official member of the National and State Council.
- 2.3. A Local Church Delegate should be a serving elder of the church, or a person scripturally suited to eldership. (1Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). If a local church is led by a person holding a Trainee or Ministers Credential, the Eldership Board may select them to be their delegate representative (with voting rights) at the National and their respective State Council.
- 2.4. A Local Church Delegate will be responsible for accurately representing National and State Council matters to their local Eldership Board and for accurately conveying the thoughts and intentions of their local church to the National and State Council.

3. APPOINTMENT OF DELEGATE

- 3.1. A delegate is to be endorsed by their Eldership Board, in an officially minuted eldership meeting, and recommended to the appropriate State Executive for approval. Approval would generally be automatic but the State Executive has the option of precluding/deferring someone if known impediments exist, and delegates must have the continuing confidence of their State Executive. If a known impediment exists, the State Executive will discuss their decision with the local church Eldership Board in a spirit of mutual respect and confidence.
- 3.2. Nomination of the Church Delegate is to be formally made using the official nomination forms.
- 3.3. There is an expectation that delegates will attend State and National Council meetings; and in selecting delegates, church elderships should recommend people who are willing and able to attend State and National Council meetings and fairly represent their church.

4. NATIONAL REGISTER

- 4.1. Names of approved delegates are to be advised by the State Secretary to the National Office for inclusion in an official register of Church Delegates. Church Delegates will receive copies of National and State Executive minutes and CRC mail-outs.
- 4.2. Local Church Delegates cannot stand for National or State constitutionally-elected official positions (i.e. Officers and Executives) as only persons holding a National Minister's Credential are eligible.

5. CESSATION AS DELEGATE

A Local Church Delegate will cease to be the official church representative if:

- 5.1. The Local Church Eldership, in an officially minuted eldership meeting decide that it is no longer appropriate for the incumbent to continue.
- 5.2. The delegate resigns from this position through a formal letter to the Church Eldership. Where there is no eldership, the letter of resignation is to be forwarded to the State Chairman.
- 5.3. The State Executive rescinds approval for the incumbent to act as the official church delegate. There is no appeal provision similar to that which applies to National and State Council members who hold either a National Minister's Credential or Minister's Credential.
- 5.4. Where a Local Church Delegate ceases to represent a church, a replacement delegate may be appointed by following the normal nomination procedures.

6. VOTING ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to vote at State or National Council meetings, nomination for the office of a Local Church Delegate must be received by the State Secretary at least ninety (90) days prior to the State or National Council meeting. An application for a delegate received after this time will render them ineligible to vote in a State or National Council meeting.

End of Document



Australian National Office
185 Frederick Rd, Seaton
SA 5023, Australia
P +618 8356 6999
F +618 8235 1891
ABN 84 537 473 256
crcchurches.org.au

CRC State Council Constitutions

Each State Council is incorporated within its own jurisdiction, and as thus has its own constitution.

Constitutions are available for your viewing or download on the [crcchurches.org](http://crcchurches.org/current-state-constitutions/) website as follows;

<http://crcchurches.org/current-state-constitutions/>

Each minister is encouraged to download and familiarise themselves with their own State constitution.

MINISTRY GUIDELINES

CRC Churches International — Australia

Introduction:

The **CRC Churches International** is a ‘...fellowship of Local Churches and Ministers...’ We believe the nature of this fellowship is to cooperate together with a common vision and purpose. One of the key ways this is done is through the training, development and recognition of its Ministers. We believe it is in the interest of the future of the CRC Churches International to provide the highest possible standard of Christian character and maturity in the training and recognition of its Credentialled Ministers.

Therefore, the following “**Ministry Guidelines**” are provided to assist the various Issuing Authorities to have consistent guidelines for the training, development, assessment and recognition of the Ministry Gifts within the CRC Churches International Australia.

These are the recommended guidelines that are offered for use by the various Issuing Authorities. We believe that these guidelines will assist in providing high Christian standards of behaviour, ethics and discipline in the Ministry of the CRC Churches International. This is a standard that we expect from a Biblical understanding of the role of Ascension Gift Ministries.

PREAMBLE:-

Ministry Gifts:

It is recognised that the Ascension Gift Ministry is given by Jesus Christ to the Church. In most cases the development of the Ministry Gift is clearly recognised by other Ministry Gifts, particularly in the life of the Local Church. The existing Ministry Gifts will therefore play a major role in the development and recognition of such emerging Ministry Gifts.

Elders:

Within the CRC Churches International it is recognised that the office of Elder is a very important one. The natural and spiritual qualifications of an Elder are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-16, 1 Peter 5:1-10. The recognition and appointment of Elders is a Local Church matter and recognised as such. It is possible that some Elders may, in time, exhibit the characteristics of the Ministry Gifts outlined in Ephesians 4:11. If such a Ministry Gift calling and characteristics become evident in a person's life, the person may be

nominated by a Credentialed Minister, with the endorsement of at least two other Credentialed Ministers, for training, development and recognition within the broader framework of the CRC Churches International.

Credential Fees:

Credential Fees are payable annually upon the issuing of a **Credential Invoice**. This will normally occur in July each year.

All Ministers credential fees are payable to the relevant State Secretary/Treasurer. The State Secretary/Treasurers forwards payments for National Ministers, State Ministers, Affiliated Ministers and Specialist Ministers to the National office and retains payments for Trainee Ministers to use in ongoing coaching and training.

Credential Cards will be issued upon the payment of the Credential invoices. These will be valid until June 30 of the following year.

The payment of fees is to be finalised within 30 days of receiving the Credential Fee account. If the Credential Fee is not paid within 30 days the Credential holder forfeits their voting rights. If after six months a Credential fee has not been paid the Issuing Authority may request an interview with the Credential holder to discuss the matter or to assess their ongoing commitment to the CRC Churches International.

1. MINISTERS

1.1. Membership

Membership in the CRC Churches International, National Council and State Council, is conferred through holding a Credential. (Refer clause 3)

Credentials may be issued to persons who:

- 1.1.1. Are Members of a recognised CRC Local Church or a Local Church acceptable to the relevant State Council or a "Para Church" organisation acceptable to the relevant State Council.
- 1.1.2. Have the requisite proven natural and spiritual qualifications of an Elder as described in: 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-16, 1 Peter 5:1-10
- 1.1.3. Display the following characteristics:
 - Evidence of stability, wisdom, and spiritual maturity in their Christian walk.
 - Express a Ministry Gift in accordance with Ephesians 4:11, etc.
 - Show integrity, loyalty and commitment to the fellowship and concepts of the CRC Churches International.
- 1.1.4. Agree to abide by the requirements of:

- The Charter of the CRC Churches International;
- The Constitution of the CRC Churches International - Australia (National Council);
- The Constitution of the CRC Churches International - State Council, as applicable.

1.1.5. Have fulfilled the compliance requirements to hold a credential with CRC Churches International Australia by;

- submitting an up-to-date Police Check; and
- having undertaken recent relevant training in Child Safe Environments, Recognising and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect, and Mandatory Notification Requirements.

Details of compliance requirements differ from state to state, so it is recommended that applicants view the documentation available on the CRC website, or contact the National Office for details.

1.1.6. Where an applicant has been divorced it is recommended that the Credential Issuing Authority adopt the "Guidelines on Divorce and Remarriage" as defined in the currently accepted document of the CRC Churches International.

1.1.7. The CRC Churches International understands that the Biblical model of a marriage relationship is to have one lifelong monogamous legally performed marriage between a man and a woman, in which there is constant love, continual care, mutual respect, Godly order, submission and sexual intimacy. In such a context children may be born and raised in an atmosphere of loving care, training and discipline.

Recognition is also given to the validity of remarriage for a person whose spouse has died or a divorced person who meets the requirements outlined in the currently accepted "Guidelines on Divorce and Remarriage" within the CRC Churches International. Fornication, adultery, defacto relationships, homosexuality or any other forms of sexual deviation condemned by Scripture are deemed unacceptable and consequently no recognition for any area of Ministry can be given to such persons who continue in, or condone as acceptable, such practices.

2. MINISTRY GIFTS

2.1. Recognition of Ministry Gifts:

The CRC Churches International, National Council and State Councils, recognise that various Ministry Gifts are given by God to the Body of Christ to enable it to function effectively.

2.2. Levels of Expression and Maturity

These gifts may have various levels of maturity and expression and should be recognised according to the nature of their function.

3. CLASSIFICATIONS OF MINISTRY

The following classifications of Ministry are recommended in the normal process of Ministry training and development together with the procedures and steps involved. However, it is accepted that in some instances it may be deemed acceptable to the Issuing Authority to move an applicant directly to a State Minister's Credential (ie: bypassing the Trainee Minister's Credential) should the applicant have the proven qualifications and evidence of Ministry calling and fruitfulness.

The following Credentials may be issued:-

3.1. Trainee Minister's Credential

Issuing Authority: State Council or its nominated officers

This Credential may be issued by the State Council or its nominated officers, to those in a training/apprenticeship role, for the purpose of giving official recognition to a person who has formally completed the necessary competencies for a Trainee Minister and who:

- Fulfils regular pastoral, Ministry and platform responsibilities in a Local Church as a Minister in training, or
- Has been given responsibility for an outreach, or
- Is pioneering a Local Church with the objective of it becoming a recognised CRC Churches International Church, or
- Is fulfilling a viable form of Ministry and is obviously a developing Ministry Gift

- 3.1.1. A Trainee Minister's Credential is to be normally held (at the discretion of the Issuing Authority) for a duration of at least three years before an application for a State Minister's or Specialist Minister's Credential is to be considered.
- 3.1.2. The Trainee Minister shall work under the covering of an approved Coaching Minister appointed by the Issuing Authority. The objective is that the appointed Minister has a close 'mentoring relationship' with the Trainee Minister and that the Trainee Minister demonstrates his/her competencies requisite to receiving a State Minister's Credential.
- 3.1.3. A person holding a Trainee Minister's Credential is an Associate Member of the relevant State Council and does not have voting rights but is expected to attend all State Councils and Conferences; and is strongly encouraged to attend all National Councils and Conferences.
- 3.1.4. The Issuing Authority has the right, in exceptional circumstances, to waive elements of the training requirements normally incumbent on the Trainee Minister – however all pastors being considered for a Trainee Minister's Credential must demonstrate that they have successfully completed the competencies required for a "Trainee Minister's Credential".

- 3.1.5. If the area of Ministry function for which this Credential was issued should cease, the Credential lapses forthwith.

3.2. State Minister's Credential.

Issuing Authority: State Council or its nominated officers.

- 3.2.1. This Credential is issued by the State Council or its nominated officers and may be given to such persons who have completed the requisite competencies for a CRC Minister and who are functioning as the Senior Minister or Assistant/Minister of a Local Church:
- while still gaining experience, or
 - who continues to perform an effective Ministry solely related to a particular locality; and,
 - who has made the decision to step aside from some of their secular vocation to devote at least one day of effort to the Ministry of Christ in their local church. This does not prejudice ministers who because they are personally pioneering a new local Church or new Ministry venture may need to be in secular employment for a season
- 3.2.2. The State Minister's Credential is a recognition of an effective and fruitful Ministry being performed in a particular area of service and applies only to the office or position concerned.
- 3.2.3. The State Minister shall work under the covering of an approved Coaching Minister appointed by the Issuing Authority. The objective is that the appointed Minister has a close 'mentoring relationship' with the State Minister.
- 3.2.4. A State Minister will be registered with the Australian Government as a Minister of Religion and an Authorised Marriage Celebrant.
- (Ministers, who because of the change to the credentialling process have not completed the State Ministry Competencies, can apply to the Issuing Authority for a Marriage Celebrant's licence. A decision will be made based on:*
- *The applicant having completed the competencies pertaining to a Marriage Celebrant's training and responsibilities.*
 - *The length of time the applicant has held a State Minister's Credential. (Normally, [at the discretion of the Issuing Authority] a period of at least twelve [12] months would be considered a minimal requirement.)*
- 3.2.5. Any person issued a State Minister's Credential shall be a Member of the relevant State Council, with voting rights in accordance with State Constitutions, and is an Associate Member of the National Council without voting rights. Such persons are expected to attend all State and National Councils and Conferences.

- 3.2.6. A State Minister's Credential should normally be held for a minimum of three years before a person may be invited by the Issuing Authority in consultation with the Coaching Minister, to complete an application for a National Minister's Credential. (Refer 3.4)
- 3.2.7. A State Minister's Credential may be held in perpetuity, for the duration of one's Ministry life.

It is recognised that in some cases the Minister in a local church fulfils a very significant and ongoing Ministry role that will continue through the Minister's lifetime. Due to any number of circumstances the person concerned may Minister to a relatively small number of people or may not move from their one place of Ministry due to secular employment or other circumstances.

The person holding the State Minister's Credential may simply not have the Ministry calling or is not available for Ministry to the larger body of Christ. It is therefore the intent of this document that the CRC Churches International gives due honour and esteem to those who may hold a State Minister's Credential in perpetuity.
- 3.2.8. Before a State Minister's Credential is granted it is expected that the required State Ministry Competencies training courses (or their equivalent acceptable to the Issuing Authority) are completed or are in the process of being completed.
- 3.2.9. The Issuing Authority has the right, in exceptional circumstances, to waive elements of the training requirements normally incumbent on the State Minister – however all pastors being considered for a State Minister's Credential must demonstrate that they have successfully completed the competencies required for a "State Minister's Credential".
- 3.2.10. If the area of Ministry function for which this Credential was issued should cease, the Credential lapses forthwith.

3.3. Specialist Minister's Credential:

Issuing Authority: State Council or its nominated officers.

- 3.3.1. This Credential may be issued to a person involved in a specialised area of Ministry, or to a person who is functioning in a Ministry role within a Local Church, but is not covered by other Credential classifications.
- 3.3.2. It is a recognition of an effective and fruitful Ministry being performed in a particular area of service and applies only to the office or position concerned.
- 3.3.3. The Specialist Minister may, in certain circumstances, be registered with the Australian Government as a Minister of Religion and an Authorised Marriage Celebrant. Such applications are to be considered by the Issuing Authority and a decision will be made based on:

- The need in the Local Church for a registered marriage celebrant.
 - The character and stability of the applicant.
 - The length of time the applicant has held a Specialist Minister's Credential. (Normally, a period of at least twelve [12] months would be considered a minimal requirement.)
- 3.3.4. The Specialist Ministry may include such areas as:
- Prison chaplains
 - Hospital chaplains
 - Youth Ministry
 - Evangelistic Ministry
 - Education.
 - World Missions (Missionary), etc.
- 3.3.5. The written designation on the Credential will read as follows:
- "Specialist Minister"
- 3.3.6. The Specialist Minister would normally have completed at least three years as a Trainee Minister and have completed the competencies necessary to become a Specialist Minister in the CRC... (See 3.2)
- 3.3.7. The Specialist Minister shall work under the covering of a Coaching Minister appointed by the Issuing Authority. The objective is that the appointed Minister has a close 'mentoring relationship' with the Specialist Minister.
- 3.3.8. A person holding a Specialist Minister's Credential shall be a Member of the relevant State Council with voting rights, except for constitutional or Credential matters [subject to consistency with the relevant State Constitution], and an Associate Member of the National Council without voting rights. Such persons are expected to attend all State and National Councils and Conferences.
- 3.3.9. Before a Specialist Minister's Credential is granted it is expected that the required competencies, training courses, or their equivalent acceptable to the Issuing Authority, are completed to the level of "Specialist Minister" or are in the process of being completed.
- 3.3.10. The Issuing Authority has the right, in exceptional circumstances, to waive elements of the training requirements normally required for a Specialist Minister – however all pastors being considered for a Specialist Credential must demonstrate that they have successfully completed the relevant competencies required for a "Minister's Credential"
- 3.3.11. If the area of Ministry function for which this Credential was issued should cease, the Credential lapses forthwith.

3.4. National Minister's Credential.

Issuing Authority: National Executive on the recommendation of the State Council or its nominated officers.

- 3.4.1. The National Minister's Credential is a recognition of the clear expression of an Ascension Gift Ministry which extends beyond the particular area of service concerned and is a recognition of the Ministry Gift throughout the CRC Churches International.

In order to provide an outline of the expectations of the Ministry of a person who is issued a National Minister's Credential the Minister should have completed the competencies required for a National Minister's Credential and:

- Have the capability to lead an average sized Australian Church of 80 to 100 people by providing the leadership, preaching Ministry, pastoral care, organisational and associated duties of that office;
- Or, in the case of the Minister being a Missionary, Itinerant Ministry, Teaching Ministry, etc, the Minister displays a level of Ministry capability, leadership and organisational capability commensurate with leading an average sized Church.
- That the person concerned has made the decision to step aside from their secular vocation and devote their full time efforts to the Ministry of Christ. This does not prejudice Ministers who because they are pioneering a new Local Church or new Ministry venture need to return to secular employment for a season;
- Or, in cases where a person may retain a secular business or employment interest that they display a clear priority for the Ministry of Christ and that they display an imminent willingness to step aside from their secular vocation.

- 3.4.2. This Credential is issued by the National Executive on the recommendation of the State Council or its nominated officers and may be given to such persons who have a proven Ephesians 4:11 Ministry Gift and who meet the Credential requirements as stated in Clauses 1&2.

- 3.4.3. All applications for a National Minister's Credential are to be submitted at the invitation of the Issuing Authority, in consultation with the Coaching Minister, to the State Issuing Authority who shall then make recommendations to the National Executive for endorsement.

- 3.4.4. Any person issued a National Minister's Credential shall then be:

- A Member of the State and National Councils with voting rights, and is expected to attend all properly convened Council meetings.
- Registered with the Australian Government as a Minister of Religion and an Authorised Marriage Celebrant.

- 3.4.5. The Issue Authority has the right, in exceptional circumstances, to waive elements of the training requirements normally incumbent on the National Minister – however all Ministers being considered for a National Minister's Credential must demonstrate that they have successfully completed the competencies required for a "National Minister's Credential"

3.5. Affiliate Minister's Credential:

Issuing Authority: National Executive on the recommendation of the State Council or its nominated officers in some cases, or a State Executive in all other cases.

This Credential may be recommended by the State Issuing Authority to the National Executive for approval for:

- a Minister who is holding (or has recently held) the equivalent of a "State Minister's Credential" in another movement or denomination and is moving into permanent Ministry within the CRC, or,
- to a Minister who is Credentialled with the CRC Churches International at a 'National Minister's' level, but whose Ministry prevents the applicant from being closely involved in a CRC Churches International church or National Council. (eg; Working overseas in a non-CRC Field or country)
- To a leading minister in a Para-Church ministry not covered by other categories,
- To a Minister of a significant local Church considering:
 - a) becoming a member Church of CRC Churches International
or
 - b) becoming a Church in fellowship with CRC Churches International.

This Credential may be approved by the State Issuing Authority for:

- a Minister who is holding (or has recently held) the equivalent of a "Trainee Minister's Credential" in another movement or denomination and is moving into permanent Ministry within the CRC, or,
- to a Minister who is Credentialled with the CRC Churches International at a 'State Minister's' level, but whose Ministry prevents the applicant from being closely involved in a CRC Churches International church or National Council. (eg; Working overseas in a non-CRC Field or country)
- To a minister in a Para-Church ministry not covered by other categories,
- To a Minister of a local Church considering:
 - a) becoming a member Church of CRC Churches International
or

- b) becoming a Church in fellowship with CRC Churches International.

In the event of a Minister moving from another denomination the following shall apply:

- 3.5.1. The applicant must be in good standing with their previous Credentialing authority.
- 3.5.2. The applicant must be coming into the CRC to fulfil a Ministry role and function endorsed by the State Issuing Authority.
- 3.5.3. The applicant must exhibit a clear desire to be identified with the CRC and be committed to the objectives, philosophy, ethics, etc., of the CRC, as outlined in the Charter, Constitutional documents, etc., at State and National level.
- 3.5.4. A person holding an Affiliate Minister's Credential shall (where geographically possible) work under the covering of a Coaching Minister appointed by the Issuing Authority. The objective is that the appointed Minister has a close 'mentoring relationship' with the Affiliate Minister.
- 3.5.5. It is recommended that the Affiliate Minister's Credential shall be held for a minimum of one year prior to an invitation being extended by the State Issuing Authority in consultation with the Coaching Minister, to complete an application for a "National Minister's Credential", or a "State Minister's Credential". An Affiliate Minister must demonstrate satisfactory completion of the competencies required for a National or State Minister's Credential prior to the award of this credential.
- 3.5.6. A person holding an Affiliate Minister's Credential shall be a Member of the State Council with voting rights except for constitutional or Credential matters [subject to consistency with the relevant State Constitution], and an Associate Member of the National Council without voting rights. Such persons are expected to attend State and National Councils and Conferences.
- 3.5.7. In the case of a Minister who is not able to relate closely to a CRC Churches International church or State Council (eg; Working overseas in a non CRC Field) an Affiliate Minister's Credential may be held indefinitely.
- 3.5.8. A person issued an Affiliate Minister's Credential may be registered with the Australian Government as a Minister of Religion and an Authorised Marriage Celebrant.

3.6. Retired Minister's Credential.

Issuing Authority: National Executive on the recommendation of the State Council or its nominated officers.

- 3.6.1. The Retired Minister's Credential is a recognition given to a person who has provided at least ten years of faithful service in the CRC whilst holding a National Minister's Credential or a Minister's Credential and whose involvement at a State and/or National organisational level is no longer appropriate (e.g. due to advanced age or ill health).
- 3.6.2. In being granted a Retired Minister's Credential, such person would no longer have voting rights nor be included in any quorum requirements at State and National Council meetings.
- 3.6.3. A Minister holding a National Minister's or State Minister's Credential wishing to be reclassified as a Retired Minister should notify their State Executive; and on their recommendation, the National Executive may process the reclassification. Alternatively, the move for reclassification may be initiated by the National Executive or the relevant State Executive, if they deem that a particular Member or Associate Member is no longer able to fulfil their organisational responsibilities; and in consultation with the Minister, make the appropriate decision.
- 3.6.4. Any person issued this Credential may be registered with the Australian Government for the purpose of conducting marriages
- 3.6.5. The holder of a Retired Minister's Credential is not required to pay the annual Credential Fee

3.7. Special Categories.

Issuing Authority: The National Executive

- 3.7.1. In the event of a person who is in a State or Territory of Australia where there is no State organisation, or who is not linked to an existing State organisation, or who is an overseas ministry or missionary ('Offshore'), who is seeking Ministry recognition with the CRC Churches International, the National Executive may issue a Credential providing that the same criteria are used for the Credential processing as are used by the State Councils.
- 3.7.2. Details of any 'Off shore' Credentials should be tabled at the next "International Leaders Gathering" by the National Chairman or National Missions Director. The purpose of this is simply for mutual cooperation and interest.

3.8. Title of Reference.

- 3.8.1. Ministers holding the following Credentials may be referred to as "Pastor":
 - Trainee Minister (At the mutual discretion of the Issuing Authority and Local Church)
 - State Minister
 - Specialist Minister

- National Minister
- Affiliate Minister
- Retired Minister

3.8.2 Churches within CRC Churches International Australia are strongly discouraged from using the term “Pastor” to refer to any persons within their churches who do not hold a recognised credential with the CRC.

3.9. Attendance at Conferences and Council Meetings.

- 3.9.1. It is expected that all National Ministers, State Ministers, Trainee Ministers, Specialist Ministers and Affiliate Ministers will be in attendance at all official State and National Council meetings and Conferences.
- 3.9.2. Should a Credentialled Minister fail to attend any State or National Council meetings for more than eighteen (18) consecutive months their Credentialing authority may request an interview to ascertain the ongoing commitment of the Minister to Ministry within the CRC Churches International.

3.10. Ministers Not Involved in Active Ministry.

- 3.10.1. Issuing Authorities will procedurally review all credentialled ministers and ascertain those who have ceased involvement in areas of active Ministry (excluding Retired Ministers). Ministers who have been assessed to be inactive shall forfeit their Credential registration after twelve (12) months, from the date of the review, have elapsed. Ministers who are assessed to be inactive will be notified in writing by the Issuing Authority their credential is under review given opportunity to show cause as to why their credential should be renewed.
- 3.10.2. Notwithstanding that anyone in this position may request an interview with the Issuing Authority if it is felt there are reasonable grounds for registration to continue beyond this period, but with the understanding that there will be regular reviews every twelve (12) months.

4. APPLICATIONS FOR CREDENTIALS.

4.1. Application forms

Applications for Ministry recognition shall be submitted to the Issuing Authority on the recommended Application Form. (Available from the State Secretary or from the CRC website)

4.2. Interviews

Applicants will be interviewed by the Issuing Authority.

4.3. The Submission of Applications

Applications for, Trainee Minister's Credential, State Minister's Credential, Specialist's Minister's Credential and Affiliate Minister's Credential are submitted at the discretion of the nominator in accordance with the guidelines of the appropriate Issuing Authority.

4.4. Application for a National Minister's Credential

Application for a National Minister's Credential shall be made only through the invitation of the State Issuing Authority and not by the applicant themselves. The basis of this invitation will be a review of the Minister's or Affiliate Minister's progress by the State Issuing Authority in consultation with the covering Minister.

Upon approval being granted by the State Issuing Authority, a recommendation will be submitted to the National Executive for approval at the National level of the CRC Churches International.

4.5. Right of appeal

In the event of any Credential applicant feeling they are being unjustly treated, they shall have the right of appeal to the Issuing Authority for the particular Credential. In such a case the appeal shall be heard by three (3) Ministers appointed by the State or National Chairman (as appropriate). The appointed Ministers must each have held a Minister's Credential for at least ten (10) years, and they cannot be Members of the relevant Issuing Authority. Their decision shall be final provided always that the only grounds of such appeal shall be:

- That the decision (felt as unjust) was arrived at in breach of natural justice; or
- That the penalty resulting from such a decision was manifestly excessive.

4.6. The normal Credentialing route

The normal route for anyone embarking on a Ministerial calling would be for the call of God to be recognised by the Local Church. The candidate would commence a period of at least 12 months which would be supervised by the local church. During this time the Local Church would construct a training schedule that enabled a candidate, under the supervision of his/her Senior Pastor (or their delegate), to complete the competencies required for a Trainee Minister, and any other relevant training that is required.

On successful completion of the requisite competencies an application for a Trainee Minister's Credential may be lodged by the Local Church with the State Issuing Authority. Formal notice must given to the State Coach Supervisor of candidates being trained at least six month before an application for a Trainee Minister's Credential can be lodged.

On receiving a Trainee Minister's Credential the minister will have a coach appointed to supervise three years of training. On successful completion of the competencies and training required for a State Minister the Coach will initiate an application for a State Minister's Credential if the candidate is ready. Where a Minister has alternative training/experience that is acceptable to the relevant

Issuing Authority, this may be taken into account and adjustments made to the three year minimum period that Trainees are normally required to complete.

The majority of Pastors, whose scope of ministry is generally limited to expression within their local church, will not normally progress beyond the award of a State Minister's Credential. However where a State Minister demonstrates a clear expression of an Ascension Gift Ministry and is a recognized as a Ministry Gift **throughout** the CRC Churches International they will be invited to pursue a National Minister's Credential. (refer to 3.4).

The opportunity to pursue a National Minister's Credential is by invitation.

1. The first opportunity to commence on the National Credential pathway will be extended to a candidate during their interview for a State Minister's Credential. At this time the Credentialling Committee, in consultation with the candidate and the candidate's coach would affirm the candidates gifting and scope of ministry and would appoint a coach.

After the State Minister has served a minimum period of three years and when all competencies have been completed, the Coach would recommend to the State Credentialling Committee that the Minister should be considered for a National Minister's Credential.

The Credentialling Committee, in consultation with the Coach, would then consider the Minister's progress and if appropriate interview the Minister before recommending to the National Executive that the Minister be awarded a National Minister's Credential.

2. Trainee Ministers who are not initially considered as a candidate for a National Credential will be assisted by their coach to develop a professional training program. This training program will be aimed to equip the Minister with specific ministry skills appropriate to their ministry focus. This training program may include some competencies from Minister's training schedule, professional or ministry courses and other ministry skill based programs.
3. State Executives and State Credentialling Committees will regularly review the credentials of all Pastors. Ordinarily this will be based on the first hand experience of the review team and any information forwarded by other National Credentialled Ministers. Where it is considered a Minister should be invited to apply to progress towards a National Minister's Credential a Coach will be appointed to assist the Minister to complete all outstanding Minister's competencies. A candidate for a National Minister's Credential would be expected to serve a minimum of three years as a Minister and complete all the Minister's competencies. Once these requirements have been satisfied the Minister's coach may recommend the Minister to the State Credentialling Committee for a National Minister's credential.

4.7. Annual Credential reviews

All Credentials are reviewed each year by the Issuing Authority.

4.8. Credential Fees

The National and State Councils shall determine fees and subscriptions to be paid when Credentials are issued.

4.9. National Credential Authorisation

National Minister's Credentials, Affiliate Minister's Credentials and Retired Minister's Credentials issued by the National Executive shall be officially signed by the National Chairman.

4.10. State Credential Authorisation

All Trainee Minister's Credentials, Minister's Credentials and Specialist Minister's Credentials issued by the State Council or its nominated officers shall be officially signed by the relevant State Chairman.

4.11. Procedures for Special Circumstances

In the event of a need to receive and process an application for a Credential in a special circumstance (eg. A Minister from another movement or denomination who is taking the leadership of a CRC Church, an overseas situation , etc) where a decision needs to be made outside the time frame of a scheduled meeting of the relevant Issuing Authority, the following procedure may apply:

- All the relevant paper-work, application forms, references from previous Credentialing authority or denomination, background information etc is mailed to the Members of the Issuing Authority giving Members adequate time for consideration
- In addition to the endorsement of an Eldership there should be an endorsement from at least two Ministers having held a Minister's Credential for at least ten years
- A decision by email/post may be made, provided that all those who consist of the Issuing Authority are agreed
- In the event of one or more Members of the Issuing Authority not in agreement and the supply of further references, information etc does not result in total endorsement then:

A meeting of the Issuing Authority by a telephone conference may be used to arrive at a decision, or if this does not result in a decision, then the matter will be adjourned to the next scheduled meeting of the Issuing Authority unless it is mutually agreed to call a special meeting to reach a decision

5. FORFEITURE OF CREDENTIAL

5.1. Violation of Ministerial Standards

Should the Issuing Authority determine that any person holding a Credential has violated the basic requirements of Scripture, the Charter, National Constitution or the relevant State Constitution in the areas of:

- Use of finance, or
- Ministerial ethics, or
- Personal morality, or
- Doctrine,

Then they shall be required to:

- Surrender their Credential immediately.
- Resign from leadership of their Local Church or Ministry immediately.
- Accept a reasonable period of restoration and rehabilitation as prescribed by the currently approved guidelines of the National Council (See clause 4:11 of the CRC National Constitution).

5.2. Removal of a Credential

These areas of violation are defined more fully in the following statements. A Minister's Credential may be removed for any of the following reasons:

- Falling into grave doctrinal error or deception regarding the Declaration of Faith contained in the CRC Churches International Charter, or
- Wilfully violating the rules of the CRC Churches International Charter, National Constitution and/or the relevant State Constitution, or the CRC Duty of Care Policy, or
- Being overtaken by moral failure, and/or by personal problems of such a nature that would discredit the work of the Lord, discredit the high standards of Christian practice and witness of their respective Local Church or Ministry and produce a detrimental effect on the high standards of Christian practice and witness of the CRC Churches International.

The removal of a Credential automatically deems the person to have lost all Membership, positions, rights and privileges within the CRC Churches International and the Local Churches and Ministries of the CRC Churches International.

5.3. Right of appeal.

If the State Council or its nominated officers makes a determination pursuant to this Clause (according to the currently approved "Restoration of Ministry Guidelines" of the National Executive) then the person concerned shall have the right of appeal to the relevant State Council, which appeal shall be decided by three Members of that State Council who have held a Minister's Credential for at least ten (10) years (appointed by the State Council but who shall not be Members of the State Executive), and in the event of that appeal failing a further right of appeal to the National Executive (which shall be decided by three Members of the National Executive nominated by the Chairman) whose decision shall be final provided always that the only grounds of such appeal shall be:

- (a) that the decision was arrived at in breach of natural justice; or
- (b) that the penalty resulting from the decision was manifestly excessive.

5.4. Resignation

In the event of a Minister of the CRC Churches International resigning from the National or State Council or resigning their Credential, it shall be deemed that

they are resigning forthwith from all positions within the CRC Churches International, its Executives, Councils, CRC Churches, Affiliate Churches, etc.

6. MOVEMENT OF MINISTERS

6.1. Relocation of Ministers

When a recognised National Minister, State Minister, Trainee Minister, Specialist Minister, or Affiliate Minister proposes to re-establish in a new location or Ministry function, then it is **strongly recommended** that such a move should be made in consultation and harmony with:

- The respective State Chairman/ Chairmen and the State Council or its nominated officers
- The Oversight/s of the respective Local Churches that may be affected

6.2. Former Crusade Ministers

In the event of a formerly CRC Credentialed Minister who is invited to Minister in a CRC Church OR a currently Credentialed CRC Minister who may be invited to Minister in a Church that was previously affiliated with the CRC Churches International, it is **strongly recommended** that contact be made with the State Chairman/Executive by the CRC Minister or party concerned. This is to ensure that appropriate principles of fellowship and Ministerial ethics are clearly understood and adhered to.

7. THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW SENIOR MINISTER

While it is recognised that the appointment of a new Senior Minister to any affiliate Local Church of the CRC Churches International is the responsibility of the relevant local oversight, it is **strongly recommended**, in the interests of cooperation and fellowship, that such a move should be made in consultation with the relevant State Chairman and the State Council or its nominated officers.

8. PARA-CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AND MINISTERS.

8.1. Ministerial Standards

While it is understood that any para-church organisation, ie. one that operates alongside churches as a servant, but is itself not a Local Church, should be working with and alongside Local Churches for the mutual benefit and advancement of all concerned, it is nevertheless recognised that there are certain standards that must be established and maintained;

8.2. Acceptance by the relevant State Councils

For the purpose of these guidelines it is deemed necessary that all para-church organisations seeking association with the CRC Churches International be accepted by the relevant State Council;

8.3. The suitability of the organisation

This acceptance is to be based on the nature and viability of each para-church organisation's Ministry and function and the suitability of their constitution;

8.4. Ministers working in Para Church Ministries

Acceptance of Ministers from para-church organisations shall be based on their ability to meet the same Credential requirements as those applying to Ministers of Local Churches affiliate with the CRC Churches International.

End of Document

CRC Credentialing Pathway

A Local Church recognises a Ministry Gift inherent in a person, and there is a sense of call into ministry. A timetable is set for completion of **TRAINEE MINISTER COMPETENCIES**.
 The **STATE COACH SUPERVISOR** is informed at the outset, who informs the **CRC NATIONAL OFFICE**, who will make contact with the prospective minister regarding CRC Duty of Care requirements

Variable time frame - 6 months minimum from time of notification.

During this time the applicant may study in the **Credential Pathway Stream** of the CRC College of Ministry

Time frame - approx. 3 years - the Coach will report to the State Supervisor every 6 months during this period

During this time the applicant must complete the **STATE MINISTER COMPETENCIES**

Once the **TRAINEE MINISTER COMPETENCIES** are completed, **CREDENTIAL APPLICATION FORMS** and **REFEREE FORMS** must be submitted to the **STATE COACH SUPERVISOR**. An interview will take place, with the applicant (and spouse if applicable) and if the interview is successful then a **TRAINEE MINISTER CREDENTIAL** will be issued.
Ordination usually occurs at a STATE CONFERENCE or other State event.

Once the **STATE MINISTER COMPETENCIES** are completed, **CREDENTIAL APPLICATION FORMS** and **REFEREE FORMS** must be submitted to the **STATE COACH SUPERVISOR**. An interview will take place, with the applicant (and spouse if applicable) and if the interview is successful then a **STATE MINISTER CREDENTIAL** will be issued.
Ordination usually occurs at a STATE CONFERENCE or other State event.

State Ministers can progress to a National credential by invitation only

This process will take at least 3 years, during which time the applicant must complete the **NATIONAL MINISTER COMPETENCIES** with their Coach, who will report to the **STATE SUPERVISOR** every 6 months

All CRC Ministers are expected to undertake **ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** as a part of the Credentialing process, and subsequent to the awarding of any CRC Credential.

Once the **NATIONAL MINISTER COMPETENCIES** are completed, **CREDENTIAL APPLICATION FORMS** and **REFEREE FORMS** must be submitted to the **STATE COACH SUPERVISOR**. An interview will take place, with the applicant (and spouse if applicable) and if the interview is successful then a **NATIONAL MINISTER CREDENTIAL** will be issued.
Ordination usually occurs at a NATIONAL CONFERENCE or other National event.



PREPARED BY IAN ELSEGOOD

This document has been prepared on the basis of information available at the time of publication. It is not a legal opinion, nor does it provide advice applicable to any particular circumstance. It is intended to be a general guide only. Individuals and churches should make their own assessment of the appropriateness of the material presented, having regard to their particular circumstances, and where appropriate seek professional advice.

Document last updated April 2017 by Peter Gillard (Cert. IV in Accounting 2016)

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper has been prepared to provide assistance for churches wishing to determine appropriate remuneration packages for pastors.

The adoption of a benchmark for determination of salaries will assist churches in the process of setting and reviewing salaries. However, there are many factors that influence this decision making process, and in recognition of this fact, a scale of salaries has been proposed. It is the responsibility of each local church to determine what level is appropriate for their particular setting.

The major recommendations and areas covered are as follows:

- Eldership boards are encouraged to put appropriate salary review processes in place in their local church.
- The adoption of remuneration packages for full time pastors where the fringe benefit component represent between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of the total package.
- The adoption of salary rates consistent with the applicable state government teacher's awards is proposed. Documentation of revised salary rates have been arranged by the CRC National Office on a two-yearly basis to assist local churches.
- It is recommended all churches align their salaries in some form to the benchmarks proposed as this will assist the process of annual salary reviews for pastors.
- Clarification of the proper treatment of fringe benefits for taxation and social security purposes.
- Identification of other relevant salary related issues such as workcover, superannuation and long service leave entitlements.
- The provision of worked examples of salary remuneration packages.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This paper has been prepared for CRC Churches International to provide a guideline for churches wishing to determine appropriate remuneration packages for pastors. The information contained in the document has been designed to assist both pastors and elderships undertaking remuneration reviews in their local church.

The recommendations made in this paper are guidelines only. Although every attempt has been made to make these guidelines clear and concise, it is acknowledged that the local church has the final say in establishing appropriate processes and remuneration levels in their own setting.

DISCLAIMER

This paper is not a legal opinion, nor does it provide advice applicable to any particular circumstance. It is intended to be a general guide only. Individuals and churches should make their own assessment of the appropriateness of the material presented, having regard to their particular circumstances, and where appropriate seek professional advice.

It is not intended that this paper cover remuneration package arrangements for other staff employed in the church. Salary rates for other staff can be determined by direct reference to the appropriate local awards that exist in these areas.

Every effort has been made to provide information relevant to the State or Territory where the legislation and conditions may differ. For simplicity, the examples given refer to South Australian conditions.

DEFINITIONS

The term "Salary" will be used regularly throughout this document. For ease of understanding, it is intended that this refer to a remuneration package in its broadest sense and not be limited to the technical understanding of the term in accounting or taxation regulations.

The term "Taxable Salary" refers to the component of a remuneration package that is by definition included as Taxable Income for the individual under Income Taxation law.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

The term "Fringe Benefits" refers to the component of a remuneration package that is defined as "Fringe Benefits" provided by the employer under Fringe Benefits Taxation law. In certain circumstances these fringe benefits may be defined as "Exempt Benefits" under FBT legislation.

AUTHOR

Ian Elsegood is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and a Registered Tax Agent. He is a CRC Pastor and a member of the PortLife Church in New Port in Adelaide's western suburbs.

THE PROCESS & IMPLEMENTATION OF SALARY REVIEWS

SALARY REVIEWS

In the local church it is important to establish a process of salary reviews. This review should be initiated by the eldership on an annual basis.

Often it is difficult for a pastor to raise the matter of a salary review at an eldership meeting. The pastor may feel it is inappropriate to suggest that a salary review be undertaken where he will obviously benefit financially from such a review. As a result, the matter may go unnoticed by well-meaning elderships unaware of the financial pressures caused by irregular reviews of salaries.

This situation is often compounded by the fact that elderships find it difficult to ascertain what an appropriate level of remuneration for ministry related activities is.

To avoid this situation, the policy of an annual salary review in local churches should be adopted by the eldership and the agreed process documented in the eldership meeting minutes.

Action Point: The frequency of salary reviews should be formally decided upon by the eldership and be documented in the eldership meeting minutes.

Note: In place of an annual review, some churches may elect to adopt automatic increases in salaries based on some external determinant (such as the consumer price index, state award, federal award or enterprise agreement) and review the appropriateness of salaries say every three years.

SALARY COMMITTEE

The eldership in the local church should appoint a salary committee responsible for the annual salary review. This salary committee should be comprised of individuals who do not directly or indirectly benefit financially from the review.

It is recommended that the salary committee be comprised of members of the eldership that are not employed by the Church, and possibly others from the church congregation with recognised experience in financial or human resource areas. For some churches it may be necessary to look outside the local church for relevant input into the salary committee, such as the church auditor or to seek assistance from the CRC National Office.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

As part of the salary review, the salary committee should be encouraged to find a balance that reflects generosity and responsibility. Scripture instructs us that “the worker deserves his wages” (1 Timothy 5:18b). Generally speaking, pastors work sacrificially in their calling and receive lesser remuneration than others in similar settings. However, in determining appropriate salary levels, other factors often dictate the level of remuneration that can be paid, such as the size of the church or the ability of the church to pay.

It is acceptable that the Senior Pastor or other qualified personnel on the church staff make recommendations to the salary committee, but not be involved in the final decisions of the salary committee. Alternatively, advice can be offered by the CRC National Office concerning appropriate levels of remuneration across the Movement.

It is recognised that tension will always exist between the need for churches to provide a fair and equitable package for pastors and the ability of churches to fund it. Churches and pastors are encouraged to consider the particular needs and circumstances of each party in their negotiations so that they may partner together to fulfil the Great Commission.

Action Point: The eldership should appoint a salary committee to undertake the salary review. The establishment of the committee should be noted in the eldership meeting minutes. No persons should be appointed to the salary committee where a conflict of interest would exist or appear to exist. Where the establishment of a committee is not possible, advice should be sought from the CRC National Office.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is important that the salary committee arrive at salary recommendations in a manner that is above reproach. Salaried eldership members need to be excluded from the final determinations of the salary committee. However, the salary committee should ensure that the recommendations it makes are consistent with budgetary guidelines set by the entire eldership, which most likely will include the Senior Minister and possibly other salaried staff of the church. Whilst respecting confidentiality in setting remuneration levels, the salary committee must ensure that the overall impact of the recommendations made on the church’s budget are endorsed by the full eldership team. Once approved by the eldership, the salary committee should review the financial arrangements put in place to ensure compliance with the approved recommendations, including a review of financial statements and salary and employee records maintained by the church.

Action Point: The salary committee should report (at a pre-determined time) to the eldership at least once a year on its activities.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

A CALLING OF GOD

One important principle is the fact that pastors are "called of God". In Davies v Presbyterian Church of Wales (1986) it was stated that "the duties owed by the pastor to the church are not contractual or enforceable. A pastor is called and accepts the call. He does not devote his working life but his whole life to the church and his religion. His duties are defined and his activities are dictated not by contract but by conscience. He is the servant of "God".

Although this definition comes from a legal perspective, it does have a significant bearing on social security payments and insurance cover which will be discussed later on in this paper.

By definition, a pastor does not enter an employee-employer relationship with the church but is seen by the law more like an independent contractor.

It is important to maintain this distinction defined by law. Written documentation entered into by the pastor and the church should reflect the independent contractor type basis (contract for services) rather than an employee-employer type relationship (contract of service).

An example contract for service is attached as Appendix 3.

Action Point: In recognition of the "calling of God", a contract for service should be entered into between the pastor and the local church.

The contract for service should clarify whether the pastor is engaged by the church in a full time or part time capacity. Particularly where church finances are limited and the church is unable to engage a pastor full time (although the demands of the position may warrant it), it should be clear that the pastor is engaged say 0.6 Full Time Equivalent (ie 3 days per week) or 0.8 FTE (4 days per week). This then should give release to the pastor, with the blessing of the church to obtain part-time employment to supplement his or her income.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS & PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

ROLE DESCRIPTION

In line with current “Best Practice”, a role description should be negotiated between the pastor and eldership team (or a sub-committee appointed by the eldership team). The role description will identify specific areas of responsibility for the pastor and outline priorities for those areas. The role description and priorities should be jointly reviewed each year by the pastor and eldership team (or sub-committee).

Where there are expectations on the pastor’s spouse to provide ministerial support (eg holding a voluntary ministry portfolio in the church), these expectations should be clearly outlined and agreed to by all parties.

ROLE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Also in line with “best practice”, there are benefits in establishing a process for evaluating the pastor’s role. The aim of the performance appraisal would be to assess the pastor’s performance concerning the agreed priority areas, identify factors that have limited the attainment of goals, and invite reflection on areas for further development. As an outcome of this appraisal, a programme of personal or skills development for the pastor could then be formulated and implemented.

It may be necessary to obtain the services of an external consultant (such as a well respected pastor in another church or the CRC National Office) to assist with the appraisal. The person nominated should be mutually agreed upon by the pastor and eldership team.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

RECOMMENDED SALARY BENCHMARK

A benchmark can be helpful in setting remuneration packages for pastors. The right of local churches to determine remuneration packages is clearly recognised and supported, but at the same time, many church boards are looking for some guidance and assistance in this matter.

There are many considerations in determining appropriate remuneration levels, including:

- size of church
- responsibilities
- physical location of church
- length of experience
- length of service
- provision of housing
- expected business travelling
- philosophy of ministry
- taxation concessions
- related ministry expenses
- other benefits
- ability of the church to pay

In identifying an appropriate benchmark, the objective is to identify an award that reflects local conditions, is easily available, regularly updated, is comparable in responsibilities to that of a pastor, has sufficient range to accommodate a wide variety of churches and would be considered "fair" by the community.

Action Point: It is recommended that the state government teacher's award be adopted for pastoral staff as a benchmark. This award (updated regularly by enterprise bargaining agreements) meets the criteria necessary for an appropriate benchmark, recognising the variation in "costs of living" from state to state.

A summary of current teacher salaries is available from the CRC National Office, and the spreadsheets are updated every two years so that the furnished examples of comparative salaries for pastors given the specific taxation concessions available to them are based on current information. (NOTE: to obtain a copy of these spreadsheets, contact the CRC National Office – peterg@familycentre.org.au or 08 8356 6999)

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

Although these award rates proposed do not specifically address the differences between rural and metropolitan settings, they do form a general basis from which each local church can then make allowances for specific conditions.

The adoption of a benchmark for salaries that is updated every two years ensures that minister's salaries keep pace with community trends. Ideally a complete salary review should be undertaken on a periodic basis, but for many churches this task has been difficult in the past due to the lack of resources and information available to churches. As an interim step, it is highly recommended that churches align existing salaries with the benchmarks proposed (increasing salaries by rounding up to the closest benchmark nominated) where possible. For part time employees, the full time equivalent salary should be applied to the benchmarks provided.

This does not remove the responsibility of the church to instigate a comprehensive remuneration review but it does in the short term mean that ministers will not be disadvantaged by cost of living increases that can erode their existing remuneration packages.

Action Point: It is highly recommended that churches align their salaries as part of a regular salary review in some form or another to the salary rates as provided and periodically updated by the CRC National Office based on current teacher salaries. This will facilitate the process of salary reviews on a regular basis as the rates are updated by the CRC National Office.

SALARY PACKAGING CONSIDERATIONS

SALARY PACKAGING

Salary packaging can provide significant benefits to both the local church and pastor. As a general principle, salary packaging arrangements reduce the costs of a church to engage a pastor, whilst at the same time maximising the amount of remuneration a pastor receives in his or her hand (Refer Appendix 1).

INCOME SPLITTING (BETWEEN PASTOR & SPOUSE)

Income splitting should not be considered unless the spouse of a minister performs specific duties and enters into a contractual arrangement with the church for the provision of those services. Clearly the relative levels of remuneration between pastor and spouse should reflect actual hours worked, experience and responsibilities of the individuals. The activities should not just incorporate those responsibilities that could reasonably be expected of a volunteer within the church.

Where income splitting is appropriate, both the pastor and their spouse should have clear role descriptions outlining the responsibilities that each one has.

It should be noted that The Tax Commissioner has wide powers to negate income splitting that diverts income from higher tax paying individuals to lower tax paying individuals if, in the Commissioner's opinion, the amount is not 'reasonable'. Income splitting should be entered into only where the facts support such an arrangement.

FRINGE BENEFITS

A fringe benefit has been described as an advantage that accrues to an employee by virtue of his or her employment. The definition of employee includes a current, former or future employee. The fringe benefits are provided in non-cash form, such as the provision of accommodation, payment of health insurance direct to a private medical benefits fund, provision of company car for private use or reimbursement of personal expenditure. This list is not exhaustive. Any private expense of an employee paid directly by an employer will constitute a fringe benefit.

It is important to note that a fringe benefit is something other than reimbursement for a work-related expense. Where a church reimburses expenses incurred by an employee that are clearly connected to his performance of his duties (eg telephone calls made from home for church business, purchase of reference materials etc.), these reimbursements provide no direct benefit to the employee.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

Allowances likewise do not constitute a fringe benefit, but may fall within the PAYG system and be subject to withholding tax (eg motor vehicle allowance). Additional information can be obtained from Taxation Ruling TR 92/17 issued by the Australian Taxation Office (<http://law.ato.gov.au/pdf/pbr/tr1992-017.pdf>)

Considerable advantages can be achieved by churches providing fringe benefits to pastors. Under existing legislation, churches that provide non-cash benefits to pastors are exempt from fringe benefits tax where

- the employer is a religious institution
- the employee is a religious practitioner
- the benefits are provided principally for pastoral duties or duties directly related to the practice, teaching or propagation of religious beliefs
- the recipient is an employee (or close relative)

For technical detail concerning Fringe Benefits Tax exemptions, refer to Section 57 of the Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act (1986) and Taxation Ruling TR 92/17

The Lutheran Church received written documentation dated May 1996 from the FBT Specialist Cell in the Australian Taxation Office that

"...the exemption from the FBT is a concession by Government to assist your organisations (churches) in their worthwhile role in the community, it is considered that the savings gained by salary packaging should be used to reduce the net employment costs of your organisations rather than passing the savings created by this concession directly on to employees as inflated wages"

This exemption is significant in that a church can provide benefits that have a greater value to the pastor than a taxable salary because there is no corresponding income tax liability that applies to the benefit.

The fringe benefits that meet the criteria provided to a pastor are considered to be "exempt" fringe benefits. These benefits are not quantified and recorded on the employee's PAYG certificate issued by the church.

Tax law does not restrict the range or type of fringe benefits which may be provided by a church to its pastor. Neither does tax law restrict the level of fringe benefits which may be provided. It is possible in limited cases that a remuneration package comprises only the provision of fringe benefits, but no salary.

Recent changes to Fringe Benefits Tax legislation imposed limits on the amount of tax exempt fringe benefits within charitable organisations, but this does not apply to benefits provided to ministers of religion engaged in pastoral duties.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

Some guidelines are given in Appendix 3 as part of the sample contract for service as to the type of fringe benefits that can be provided. The list is not exhaustive, but does serve to clarify the purpose for which the fringe benefits are provided to the pastor.

Other denominations have guidelines that prescribe the apportionment of a salary package between taxable income and the provision of fringe benefits. Currently, the following arrangements exist:

- Lutheran churches recommend an approximate 55/45 split between salary and fringe benefits.
- Church of Christ churches recommend an approximate 60/40 split between salary and fringe benefits.
- Baptist churches recommend an approximate 60/40 split between salary and fringe benefits.
- Assemblies of God churches make no recommendation of allocation between salary and fringe benefits but do suggest that consideration be given to the "spirit of the law that still provides generous tax exemptions to churches, colleges and other ministries".

The Tax Office has expressed verbal opinion only at various times that although no limit is given in the legislation, a 50% split between taxable salary and fringe benefits is "reasonable". It should be highlighted that this reflects opinion, and not the law.

In determining a salary package, consideration must be given to what would be regarded as "reasonable" by the "man in the street". Churches must comply with the letter of the law, the spirit of the law and not be involved in any practice that could be interpreted as a tax avoidance scheme.

With this in mind, it is important to note that when salary packaging places the pastor in a low tax bracket, the allocation of a portion of the remuneration package as taxable income results in only a small amount of income tax payable by the pastor. In most cases this is true when there is a 50/50 split of the remuneration package between taxable salary and fringe benefits.

There are cases where the provision of fringe benefits and no salary may be appropriate. In the case of a part time pastor (engaged say 4 days per week in secular work and 1 day per week paid work at the church), the payment of a nominal reimbursement to cover ministry costs may be justifiably 100% fringe benefits. It would be difficult on the other hand for a full time pastor to justify that they receive no taxable salary and only fringe benefits when the remuneration

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

package provided by the church is in line with salaries paid in the general community.

Practically speaking, the provision of fringe benefits and no salary would preclude the pastor from accessing cash for living and general expenses, as fringe benefits can not be paid as cash. For a pastor with no other income, even a cash salary below the tax threshold (currently \$18,200) would allow the pastor to access a cash component of the remuneration package without attracting a personal tax liability.

In all cases, the determination of an appropriate split between cash salary and fringe benefits must stand the scrutiny of the wider community.

Action Point: Based on current accepted practice, consistent with the spirit of the concessions available, it is recommended for a full time pastor that the fringe benefit component of the remuneration package represent between 60 per cent and 40 per cent of the total package.

The allocation between a cash salary and fringe benefits should be clearly documented by the employer prior to the employee earning the remuneration. This needs to be in place to ensure that an "Effective Salary Sacrifice Agreement" is in place that will be recognised by the Australian Taxation Office.

Please note that for simplicity, all examples provided in this paper assume a 50/50 split between salaries and fringe benefits.

It is necessary that an official record is kept in the church of the remuneration package arrangements for the pastor. The distinction between taxable salary and fringe benefits provided as part of the package should be clearly made.

Action Point: A note in the salary committee minutes should clearly record the remuneration package of a pastor, clearly distinguishing between taxable salary and fringe benefits paid for the pastor's benefit.

PROVIDED HOUSING

A church may be in a position to provide a manse for the pastor. The value of that housing component should be taken into consideration when determining the remuneration package. As a guide, the South Australian Baptist Union has valued the provision of housing at around \$170 per week in 2004. It is possible that the value of provided housing could range from \$100 - \$400 per week depending on the particular circumstances. Local housing rental market rates may be used as a reasonable guide for churches in determining a value for provided housing.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

ALLOWANCES – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In determining a salary package, due regard needs to be given to work related expenses that will be incurred by the employee in performing his duties.

Reimbursement of these expenses should be made by the church and can be paid in the form of allowances. In many cases, the payment of these allowances provide no direct benefit to the employee, but may be subject to PAYG tax deductions.

Additional information can be obtained from Taxation Ruling TR 92/17 issued by the Australian Taxation Office (<http://law.ato.gov.au/pdf/pbr/tr1992-017.pdf>)

Where the allowances paid reflect the costs incurred by the employee in performing his duties, the amounts should not be regarded as a benefit to the employee in determining appropriate remuneration levels for employees. Where the allowances exceed the costs incurred by employees in performing their duties, the excess amount paid should be considered in determining cash salary and fringe benefit remuneration levels.

VEHICLE ALLOWANCES

In many situations it is assumed that the pastor provides his own vehicle for ministry work. The vehicle expenses incurred by the pastor (excluding private usage) should be reimbursed by the church.

As a guide, the South Australian Baptist Union has calculated that on average, business travel by a pastor equates to 12,000 kms per annum. An allowance of \$118 per week has been included in their salary packages in recognition of this expected business travel. In circumstances where the annual rate of business travel is expected to exceed 12,000 kms, arrangements are made to reimburse the pastor for this additional travel at a suggested rate of 51c/km. (NOTE – these are 2004 figures which will have changed since)

Special consideration needs to be given where large distances need to be travelled by the pastor, particularly in rural areas.

As a guide it may be reasonable to consider the cost of running vehicles published by the applicable state automotive association (RAA, NRMA, RACV).

Churches may elect to pay a vehicle allowance or a petrol allowance to a pastor. Alternatively, the church may wish to incorporate the reimbursement into the fringe benefit component of the remuneration package.

If the option of the vehicle or petrol allowance is selected, the allowance is included as income (as an allowance) on the pastors PAYG certificate. This may be advantageous to the pastor where a large amount of business travel is undertaken that is not reimbursed by the church. In that situation, the pastor would be able to

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

claim a tax deduction for the component of business travel that was not reimbursed, effectively reducing the pastor's taxable income and liability for income tax.

Vehicle purchase arrangements negotiated by the pastor or church may be an option to consider.

PHONE AND RESEARCH ALLOWANCES

Phone and research allowances can also be incorporated into a remuneration package. Home telephone or mobile phone expenses (excluding private usage) should be covered by the church.

It is difficult sometimes to differentiate between private and church use, but the onus should be on the pastor to maintain records and act with integrity in these areas to determine appropriate levels of reimbursement. It would be appropriate to keep records for a 3 month period to determine the percentage of church and personal use, and then use this percentage as a guide for future periods (i.e. 35% church use and 65% personal use).

Research allowances (or book allowances) can also be provided to the pastor. This allowance encourages the pastor to purchase publications that assist in the professional development of the pastor. This could be paid as an allowance or reimbursement of expenditure up to an agreed amount based on accounts provided by the pastor to the church. Alternatively, the church may elect to purchase publications required by the pastor to build up a church library of resources owned by the church.

In determining the appropriate remuneration package for pastors, all the various allowances or benefits provided to the pastor should be compiled to identify the total remuneration received. If this is not done, it is difficult for those responsible for salary reviews to make valid comparisons concerning remuneration packages or to fully understand the "big picture" when undertaking salary reviews.

An example of how a remuneration package could be presented is provided in Appendix 4.

PASTORS EXPENSE ACCOUNT

To process the payment of fringe benefits, the church may elect to establish a bank account for this purpose. The account remains the property of the church and must be under the name of the church (eg XXXX Church Pastors Expense Account). At regular intervals (say fortnightly, if the pastor's salary is paid fortnightly), amounts are transferred from the church's general bank account into the pastor's expense account.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

There are two ways then that can be chosen to operate this account.

A church can choose to operate the bank account within the normal financial operating systems of the church. The signatories may be the same as for other church accounts, although the pastor may also be included as an additional signatory to the account. The church and the pastor should agree in advance the amount and types of benefit to be paid from this account. Supporting documentation, with appropriate authorisation should be filed in the same way that other bank accounts within the church are operated.

Alternatively, the pastor may be given authority to operate this account on his own. Specific reporting requirements and obligations on the pastor are required under this arrangement. These are outlined in the sample contract for service in Appendix 1.

The provision of a credit card in the name of the church may also be another practical way of administering fringe benefits. However, it should be noted that additional supporting documentation (such as tax invoices and receipts) are required and not just the credit card dockets to meet audit requirements.

On no account is cash to be withdrawn from the pastor's expense account, as this will change the very nature of the payments made. If cash was drawn from the account, this amount would represent cash salary on which PAYG tax must be deducted at the appropriate rate.

The repayment of a pastor's line of credit loan account by the church is a fringe benefit provided the repayment does not result in a credit balance in the account.

Since the account is a church account, GST paid through this account can be claimed back through the church's Business Activity Statement. The church has the choice of whether to use the GST credits claimed to benefit the church, or as an additional benefit to the pastor.

SALARY SACRIFICE ARRANGEMENTS

A pastor may wish to consider further salary sacrifice arrangements that reduce the taxable salary received outside of the fringe benefit arrangements. Salary sacrifice arrangements allow a pastor to allocate a portion of their salary before tax is deducted on the amount (thereby reducing the amount of tax payable). Some examples available include:

- the payment of tithes/offerings into the church
- additional contributions to a superannuation fund
- the provision of a lap top computer (specifically exempted under fringe benefits tax legislation)

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

These salary sacrifice arrangements do not create a Fringe Benefits Tax liability owed by the church.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Examples of salary remuneration packages are provided in Appendix 4.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

SOCIAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

The assessment of fringe benefits in determining Social Security benefits causes a great deal of confusion and concern for pastors.

Different rules apply for the various types of benefits, and terminology has changed over the years. The major distinction applies to Family Tax Benefit compared to other Social Security benefits.

It is important in relation to these matters that a contract for services between the Church and pastor has been clearly documented.

FAMILY TAX BENEFIT (PART A & PART B)

For the purpose of determining a pastor's entitlement to Family Tax Benefit, fringe benefits are excluded from the calculations. The definition of income for family tax benefits is taken from Income tax legislation, being "taxable income" and "reportable fringe benefits". As the fringe benefits received by pastors are "exempt" benefits, family income only includes the taxable salary of the pastor.

PARENTING PAYMENT & OTHER SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

For the purpose of determining a pastor's entitlement to Parenting Payment and other Social Security benefits, the definition of income includes fringe benefits received, but does allow for some deductions to be offset against this income that relate to "direct ministry expenses". It is recognised that in many cases, fringe benefits comprise amounts that are of a "private nature" as well as some that are connected to ministry activity (such as the use of the minister's home for church hospitality etc). The reimbursement of direct ministry expenses can be excluded from the income test.

It is important to note that fringe benefits need to be disclosed to Centrelink for the calculation of Age Pension, Austudy and Newstart Allowance benefits.

The suggested approach for the declaration of fringe benefits is for the Church to provide a letter to Centrelink documenting the allocation of fringe benefits between private expenditure and direct ministry expenditure based on the particular circumstances that relate to the minister.

An example of the letter for this purpose is attached as Appendix 2.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

OTHER SALARY RELATED MATTERS

WORKCOVER ISSUES

Workcover arrangements vary from state to state. To determine whether ministers of religion are covered by Workcover and on what basis the levies are calculated, each church should contact the appropriate CRC Churches State Executive for guidance. In some cases, it should be noted that where a compensation claim is made, a pastor's entitlement will be based on his salary only (excluding fringe benefits). Additional top-up insurance to cover the fringe benefit component of a pastor's remuneration package can be obtained from Australian Christian Services. Further details are available from the CRC national office.

SUPERANNUATION

The church has a responsibility to contribute superannuation to employees. This obligation extends to a contractor where the contract requires the contractor to provide labour personally and the labour part of the contract is more than 50% of its value. Clearly, pastors fall within that definition.

The amount of superannuation contributions is calculated on the "earnings base" of the employee.

Although technically, superannuation contributions only have to be paid on salary (and not fringe benefits), it is considered appropriate that the contributions be based on the total remuneration package provided to the pastor.

It should also be noted that since remuneration packages are generally less for pastors (because of the specific taxation concessions available) the accumulation of superannuation contributions over the years may be considerably smaller than for others in the secular workforce. Pastors need to consider their retirement needs in light of this and may wish to voluntarily contribute towards their superannuation.

Superannuation contributions need not be made by an employer in certain circumstances. No contribution is required where employees are paid less than \$450 in a calendar month, or for those aged 70 years and over or those under 18 years of age working 30 hours or less per week.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

LONG SERVICE LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

Long service leave legislation differs from state to state. A summary is provided below of the various States:

State/Territory	Qualifying Period	Length of Leave	Pro Rata Commences
Federal	15 years	13 weeks	10 years
New South Wales	10 years	2 months	5 years
Victoria	15 years	13 weeks	10 years
Queensland	10 years	8.67 weeks	10 years
South Australia	10 years	13 weeks	7 years
Western Australia	15 years	13 weeks	10 years
Tasmania	15 years	13 weeks	7 years
Northern Territory	10 years	13 weeks	7 years
ACT	10 years	2 months	7 years

For example, in South Australia, a pastor is entitled to long service leave of 13 weeks after 10 years service. After 7 years, a pro-rata entitlement to long service leave is payable on termination of employment. This long service leave is provided to employees in recognition and as an incentive for longevity of service with one organisation.

Pastors, by the nature of their calling, may move from church to church before becoming entitled to pro-rata long service leave entitlement. In recognition of the fact that the pastor is responding to God's calling on his life, acknowledgement of his service spent at the previous church can be made.

The following conditions should be met for this to take place

- The pastor leaves in good standing
- The pastor's move from one church to the other is endorsed by the respective eldership teams and State CRC Executives
- An amount representing the current (calculated) entitlement to long service leave is transferred from the "previous" church to the "new" church. (Note that when moving from one state to another where entitlements differ, a negotiated arrangement that suits both churches and the pastor may be necessary)

The "new" church would then accept responsibility for the completed years of service the pastor has served at the "previous" church.

APPENDIX 1

COMPARISON OF SALARIES – THE EFFECT OF SALARY PACKAGING

In making a comparison of salaries based on salary packaging arrangements, "after tax" or "net" salaries based on the South Australian Teachers Awards are compared with and without the allocation of fringe benefits. The left hand section of the table calculates the "net" or "take home" pay of a teacher. The right hand section of the table indicates the equivalent "net" salary package received by a pastor where the remuneration package is split 50% salary /50% fringe benefits.

The calculations have been based on current resident personal tax rates only. No allowance has been made for medicare levy, rebates or other adjustments. It has been assumed that the individual earns no other taxable income.

These calculations will be updated by the CRC national office each year or when renegotiated between the Government and teachers through enterprise bargaining agreements.

As an example for determining the appropriate level of remuneration, the following basis is used within the South Australian Teachers Award:

- A step 3 teacher holds a three year degree qualification with no previous teaching experience.
- A step 12 teacher holds a three year degree qualification with ten years full time teaching experience.
- An AST2 teacher holds a supervisory position over a number of employees, exhibiting advanced teaching and management skills within the organisation

Worked examples for these three specific scenarios are provided in Appendix 4.

A summary of current teacher salaries is available from the CRC National Office, and the spreadsheets are updated every two years so that the furnished examples of comparative salaries for pastors given the specific taxation concessions available to them are based on current information. (NOTE: to obtain a copy of these spreadsheets, contact the CRC National Office – peterg@familycentre.org.au or 08 8356 6999)

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLE LETTER TO CENTRELINK FOR PURPOSES OF PARENTING PAYMENT OR AGE PENSION

To Centrelink Office

Pastor is employed by

The remuneration package per week is as follows:

Gross Salary	\$.....
Fringe Benefits (of a private nature)	\$.....

Total Income (for purposes of calculating entitlement to Parenting Payment/Age Pension	-----
	\$
	=====

Fringe Benefits (reimbursement of ministry related expenses)	\$.....	<u>Note A</u>
--	---------	---------------

Please find attached an itemised list of fringe benefits provided to the employee, detailing the type and amount of fringe benefits received and the amount considered to be reimbursement of ministry related expenses for each category of fringe benefit.

Note A

The Pastor receives this amount to cover ministry related expenses. It is the intention of the church that this amount covers:

- the costs involved in running and maintaining a suitable vehicle to meet the transport needs associated with carrying out his religious duties (ie visitation and pastoral care)
- housing related expenses as the pastor is required to use his home or provide accommodation for the purpose of counselling, hospitality, sermon/teaching preparation, convening of functions and other activities related to his ministry role
- Other costs directly related to his ministry role.

Advice has been provided from Centrelink that this amount should be excluded from any calculation of entitlements for Parenting Payment/Age Pension as this represents a direct reimbursement of expenses incurred by the pastor in carrying out his responsibilities directly related to his ministry role.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

APPENDIX 2

It is our understanding that the calculation of entitlements for Parenting Payment/Age Pension should be based on the Gross Salary and Fringe Benefits of a private nature notified above.

Yours Faithfully

Listing of Fringe Benefits provided (example)

Type	Total Provided	Ministry Related	Private	Basis of Calculation
House rental	\$	\$	\$	
Rates & Taxes	\$	\$	\$	
Vehicle Expenses	\$	\$	\$	
Hospitality	\$	\$	\$	
Telephone	\$	\$	\$	
Medical Insurance	\$	\$	\$	
Education Costs	\$	\$	\$	
Other (specify) ...	\$	\$	\$	
Other (specify) ...	\$	\$	\$	
Other (specify) ...	\$	\$	\$	
Other (specify) ...	\$	\$	\$	
Other (specify) ...	\$	\$	\$	
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$	

SAMPLE CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

Please note that a Template CRC Employment Contract is available in WORD format on the CRC website for download and adjustment for use.

Please use this link <http://crcchurches.org/?p=9435> to view and download.

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

APPENDIX 4

SALARY REMUNERATION WORKED EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

SALARY PACKAGE BASED ON SA TEACHERS AWARD LEVEL 3

Equivalent to 4 years training but no experience

TEACHER'S GROSS SALARY	\$ 73,320
LESS TAX	\$ 15,376
NET SALARY	\$ 57,944

PASTORS REMUNERATION PACKAGE

TAXABLE SALARY	\$30,103
LESS TAX	\$2,262
NET SALARY	\$27,841

FRINGE BENEFITS	\$30,103
-----------------	----------

TOTAL REMUNERATION PACKAGE RECEIVED BY PASTOR (after tax)	\$57,944
--	-----------------

COST TO CHURCH

TAXABLE SALARY	\$30,103
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$30,103
	\$60,206
LEAVE LOADING (17.5% for 4 weeks of TS)	\$405
SUPERANNUATION (9.5% of total package)	\$5,720
WORKCOVER (1% of Taxable Salary)	\$301
LONG SERVICE LEAVE PROVISION (1.3 weeks p.a.)	\$1,505
GST tax credits for FB amounts (7% estimate) - added back	\$2,107
TOTAL COST OF PACKAGE TO CHURCH	\$66,030

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

APPENDIX 4

SALARY REMUNERATION WORKED EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 2

SALARY PACKAGE BASED ON SA TEACHERS AWARD LEVEL 8

Equivalent to 4 years training and 5 years experience

TEACHER'S GROSS SALARY	\$ 91,673
LESS TAX	\$ 21,866
NET SALARY	<u>\$ 69,807</u>

PASTORS REMUNERATION PACKAGE

TAXABLE SALARY	\$36,657
LESS TAX	\$3,507
NET SALARY	<u>\$33,150</u>
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$36,657
TOTAL REMUNERATION PACKAGE RECEIVED BY PASTOR (after tax)	<u>\$69,807</u>

COST TO CHURCH

TAXABLE SALARY	\$36,657
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$36,657
	<u>\$73,314</u>
LEAVE LOADING (17.5% for 4 weeks of TS)	\$493
SUPERANNUATION (9.5% of total package)	\$6,965
WORKCOVER (1% of Taxable Salary)	\$367
LONG SERVICE LEAVE PROVISION (1.3 weeks p.a.)	\$1,833
GST tax credits for FB amounts (7% estimate) - added back	\$2,566
TOTAL COST OF PACKAGE TO CHURCH	<u>\$80,406</u>

SALARY GUIDELINES FOR CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

APPENDIX 4

SALARY REMUNERATION WORKED EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 3

SALARY PACKAGE BASED ON SA TEACHERS AWARD AST 2

Exhibiting advanced teaching skills and leading other teachers

TEACHER'S GROSS SALARY	\$ 99,965
LESS TAX	\$ 24,934
NET SALARY	<u>\$ 75,031</u>

PASTORS REMUNERATION PACKAGE

TAXABLE SALARY	\$39,748
LESS TAX	\$4,465
NET SALARY	<u>\$35,283</u>

FRINGE BENEFITS	\$39,748
<hr/>	

TOTAL REMUNERATION PACKAGE RECEIVED BY PASTOR (after tax)	\$75,031
<hr/>	

COST TO CHURCH

TAXABLE SALARY	\$39,748
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$39,748
	<u>\$79,496</u>
LEAVE LOADING (17.5% for 4 weeks of TS)	\$535
SUPERANNUATION (9.5% of total package)	\$7,552
WORKCOVER (1% of Taxable Salary)	\$397
LONG SERVICE LEAVE PROVISION (1.3 weeks p.a.)	\$1,987
GST tax credits for FB amounts (7% estimate) - added back	\$2,782
TOTAL COST OF PACKAGE TO CHURCH	<u>\$87,186</u>

Statement on Sexual Harassment

CRC Churches International Australia

CRC Churches International Australia and organisations are committed to providing a workshop and work environment which is free from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination which is unlawful under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and other various State Acts i.e. South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

All CRC Churches International church members, staff and voluntary workers have a right to be treated with respect and dignity and to this end the following information and process is made available.

1. WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is uninvited and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature.

It is deliberate verbal or physical /sexual behaviour towards a person that is uninvited, unwelcome, humiliating or intimidating.

It may include actions such as:

1. Continual and habitual leering at a person with the express purpose of embarrassing and humiliating their personal dignity and which interferes in their capacity to carry out their work duties.
2. Touching or holding a person who has not given their permission and has clearly expressed that they do not want this to happen again.
3. Telling sexually suggestive or smutty jokes in a person's presence when they have clearly expressed their disapproval of this occurring again.
4. Unsolicited kissing on the lips, pinching a person's bottom or pressurising a person so as to force an embrace or a hug.
5. Continually asking a person to go out with them after they have definitely said "no".

6. When a pastor, leader, counsellor etc causes a person to become dependent on them for the express purpose of commencing a sexual liaison. Even if the counsellee is a willing partner, this behaviour is viewed as an abuse of spiritual authority, is a violation of trust and is deemed harassment from the person in the position of power and authority.

2. What can a person do if they feel they are being sexually harassed?

1. Tell the harasser straight away that one does not want him/her to behave in that way.
2. Immediately let a superior of both you and the perpetrator become aware of this incident, then record and date the incident and its reporting.
3. Any victim has the right to appeal to the respective officers or executive committees of the CRC Churches International, since together they provide an authority and accountability net for all members, leaders and officers of the CRC Churches International.
4. The accountability structures of the CRC Churches International are as follows
 - a. The Senior Pastor of the local church or the Oversight/Board of Elders of that local church.
 - b. The State Chairman or State Executive of the CRC Churches International in the State where the incident has occurred.
 - c. The National Chairman or the National Executive of the CRC Churches International of Australia.

Any sexual harassment victim is encouraged to make contact with the appropriate officer or executive committee depending on who is the offender and the location of the offence.

5. It is recommended that action be taken as quickly as possible after an offence has occurred. Sexual harassment is not only against the law of the land, as already stated, but it is strongly condemned in the Bible and in the ministerial and fellowship ethics of the CRC Churches International. Therefore, none of the people in our churches and work places should have to tolerate sexual harassment.

6. Our Christian witness and testimony before the world demands that every case of sexual harassment be handled in a responsible and just manner by the officers and committees of the CRC Churches International. Therefore the perpetrators need to be disciplined in accordance with our Guidelines on the Discipline and Restoration of Ministers and the victims must be cared for and lovingly ministered to.

Drafted by Pastor Bill Vasilakis.

Amended and endorsed by the National Executive in September 1993.

Updated by Peter Gillard April 2017

End Document.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

CRC Guidelines

1. The Bible very clearly teaches that women are on an equal footing with men when it comes to operating and functioning in any ministry role within the body of Christ.
2. That the Bible does not expressly forbid women being involved in any particular areas of ministry.
3. As ministry involves giving spiritual leadership and exercising authority in matters of church life, we see no restriction on women functioning in any governmental role within local churches.
4. The principles of submission and being accountable apply for all ministry, whether young, whether older, whether female or male. Every church and every minister needs to be accountable to his fellow ministers and to the Executives that are elected in each State and in the Commonwealth for the protection of those ministers and churches and the entire movement.
5. Therefore, we see that there are no grounds to forbid women from exercising any ministry role within CRC Churches International and from fulfilling any office whether in the local church, whether in the State or whether in the Commonwealth.
6. The CRC opened the door and faced the issue over 20 years ago when it commenced credentialling women. Today, we have women operating in every area of ministry, from being on our oversights, being credentialled with assistant minister's credentials, being credentialled with full minister's credentials, being Senior Ministers of local churches and even being on our Executives. To now bring in some restrictive code that cannot stand up to scripture and that clearly prejudices women from developing in ministry and in leadership would be a retrograde step and not in the interests of CRC Churches International.
7. The women of our movement, comprising about 50% of our membership, should be encouraged to rise up and fulfil the call that God has placed on their lives. For many women, this call is to serve God in a full-time capacity.
 - Agreed to at the March 1988 meeting of the National Executive.

GUIDELINES on the question of the DISCIPLINE and RESTORATION of MINISTERS

Moral, financial, ministry ethics & doctrinal areas

***CRC Churches International - Australia
National Executive***

PREAMBLE

The CRC is committed to maintaining high moral and ethical integrity of its ministers. In the case of failure in these areas it is important to have a uniform approach in matters of discipline and restoration of ministers. This guideline outlines our approach in this matter.

1. Constitutional statements

1.1 In Article 5.6 “Forfeiture of Credential, the Constitution of the CRC Churches International – Australia”, National Council makes the following statement.

“Should the Issuing Authority of a credential (as defined in clause 5.3.1) determine that a holder of a credential has violated the basic requirements of Scripture, or this Constitution, or the Charter, in the areas of:

- Use of finance, or
- Ministerial ethics, or
- Personal morality, or
- Doctrine’

then they shall be required to:

- Surrender their credential immediately.
- Resign from leadership of their church immediately.
- Resign from any leadership position held within the Organisation.
- Accept a reasonable period of restoration and rehabilitation as prescribed by the relevant Issuing Authority which has given due consideration to the current “Guidelines on the Discipline and

Restoration of Ministers" document of the Organisation."

- 1.2 The Charter of the CRC Churches International gives an abbreviated version of our Declaration of Faith with respect to our basic doctrines, our Core Values and other cardinal Christian truths that we expect all our credentialed ministers to believe in and follow. The expanded version of our Declaration of Faith is the official CRC version of our Christian doctrines. Our Charter also clearly spells out the principles that govern our fellowship, ministerial policy and financial ethics.
- We have a Statement on Forfeiture of Credential in our National Constitution and this now provides a clear method of assessment of when a person has violated Scripture, our Charter and Constitution and secondly, how the restoration and rehabilitation of the credentialed minister is to occur.
- 1.3 To help the necessary officers and leaders within the CRC to determine when action should be taken against an erring minister, the following amplification of the Constitutional Article 5.6 is given.
- A Minister's credential may be removed for any of the following reasons.
- Falling into grave doctrinal error or deception regarding the abbreviated Declaration of Faith contained in the CRC Charter, or the expanded version in the CRC Ministry Manual, or
 - Wilfully violating the provisions of the CRC Charter, National Constitution and/or State Constitution, or
 - Being overtaken by personal problems of such a nature that would discredit the work of the Lord, producing a detrimental effect on the CRC Churches International - Australia.

2. The nature and purpose of discipline

Discipline is an exercise mandated by the scriptures for which the Church has authority in and is responsible to outwork. The aims of discipline are that God may be honoured, that the purity and welfare of the ministry and the Church be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration in Christian lifestyle and, where applicable, Christian ministry.

Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of the minister, while fully providing for the protection and the spiritual welfare of our local churches. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy.

However badly a minister may have fallen he can, upon genuine repentance (as far as can be determined) be restored to fellowship in the Christian Church, but this does not guarantee restoration to ministry.

Discipline includes training, especially of the kind that produces self-control, orderliness, obedience and a capacity for co-operation. It is believed that discipline can only be adequately implemented where accountability and a monitoring of a person's response is provided for.

3. Matters that require disciplinary action

Cases Of Moral, Financial, Ministry Ethics And Doctrinal Breakdown Are Covered In The Following Areas:

3.1 Moral breakdown or failing to maintain one's sexual integrity includes:-

Embracing or condoning the areas of sexual behaviour that are clearly contrary to accepted Biblical Christian principles and ethics: i.e. fornication, adultery, homosexual practice, lesbianism, rape, paedophilia/child molestation, sexual harassment, incest, etc.

3.2 Financial breakdown or lack of integrity in personal and/or church matters includes:

- (i) Purposefully failing to maintain a proper financial accounting procedure for the church, ie. monthly or quarterly and yearly statements and a yearly audit of the churches finances by a qualified person who is not a member of the church.
- (ii) Purposefully failing to be accountable with respect to recording or minuting all authorised financial decisions and receipting of all expenses incurred by the church and any responsible officers.
- (iii) Purposefully failing to ensure that no conflict of interest occurs with respect to a minister's salary/remuneration.
Salary/remuneration decisions should be taken out of the hands of the salaried pastoral ministry staff who are recipients of a wage and placed into the hands of an independent salaries/remuneration committee; ie. a group of non-salaried leaders of the church (with reference to the National Guidelines for setting salaries document.)
- (iv) Purposefully failing to obey the letter and the spirit of the law of the land with regard to Taxation matters and other legal requirements.
- (v) Any instance of theft by a minister.

3.3 Ministry Ethics violations include:

- (i) Refusing to be cooperative and having a contentious attitude that continually violates ministerial courtesy with fellow CRC ministers and with ministers of other Christian movements.
- (ii) Refusing to work within a team structure (ie Elders, Spiritual Oversight) as required in our Charter and assuming a dictatorial and unaccountable authority over a Church.

3.4 Doctrinal breakdown includes:

Adhering to and/or promoting doctrinal error which is recognised as such by Bible-believing Pentecostal Christians and is contrary to the CRC Declaration of Faith.

All CRC preaching and teaching is to be consistent with the cardinal Christian doctrines and truths as stated in the CRC Declaration of Faith.

4. Preventative, rather than remedial, emphasis

The leadership of our Movement should endeavour to offer sound preventative measures to our ministers from the training phase prior to ordination, right through to special in-service sessions for men and women who have been in the ministry for many years.

These measures include:

- 4.1 Ministry Training Courses – as these are often a training phase for potential ministers, as well as for other ministry roles, then character formation and discussion in the areas of moral, financial and ministry ethics should not be neglected.
- 4.2 Competency-based credentialing – competencies for all credential levels should always include competencies that cover knowledge and application of moral, financial and ministry ethics.
- 4.2 Credentialling interview process - it is recommended that smaller teams of senior and experienced ministers (i.e. Office Bearers) be the Credentialling Committees rather than the whole Executive to cover the very important duty of thoroughly assessing credential applications.
- 4.3 Comprehensive and strictly confidential application forms with detailed referee's statements from at least three referees that touch the potential problem areas are necessary.
- 4.4 Teaching and discussion sessions at State and National Conferences or at special In-service Training Seminars for credentialled ministers.
- 4.5 Generally lifting the ethical and moral expectations of our potential ministers to the highest possible standards.

5. Basic procedure for discipline and restoration

5.1 Discipline of Ministers

- a. When it has been clearly established that a minister is guilty of a prolonged abuse of ministerial trust in any of the following areas:
 - sexual immorality
 - financial corruption

- violation of ministerial ethics
- doctrinal error,

then unless there is a full and frank acknowledgment of wrongdoing and acceptance of their guilt, the minister shall be disfellowshipped from all CRC churches; ie, the minister should not be invited to participate in any CRC church service or activity, and should not be permitted to take out membership in any CRC church.

- b. Discipline in general should wait until the case has been heard and judged by three members of the relevant Ministry Credentialling Authority or by other suitable ministers who have held a National credential for at least 5 years. These appointments are to be made by the relevant Chairman.
- However in extreme and emergency cases where there is sufficient evidence of a serious breach of ministerial conduct the State Chairman together with the National Chairman have the power to suspend ministerial certificates and credentials pending an investigation and judgement by the relevant Ministry Credentialling Authority.
- c. A National Minister's Credential may only be suspended by the relevant State Ministry Credentialling Authority where there has been prior consultations with the National Chairman or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.
- d. It is recognized that any minister has the right of appeal, in accordance with the provisions of the State and National Constitutions.

5.2 Restoration of Ministers

- a. Objective and Process

The aim is to restore the minister in his or her personal relationship with the Lord and, if necessary, effect restoration in the minister's relationship with spouse, family, local church and any other offended parties.

- The restoration process is to focus on :
 - i. Working through the issues that predisposed the person to commit such sin.
 - ii. Rebuilding firm Biblical moral values and a lifestyle consistent with such values, so that the minister is restored to be able to model God's standards.

- b. Basic Procedure

The restorative period is to cover a minimum period of two years. During this time a suspension of the minister's credential and

marriage celebrant's licence is to occur. There is to be at least a twelve month minimum break from active ministry.

A gradual return to some ministry function in the second year of the restorative process can occur but under the covering of restorers/counsellors.

This period may need to be extended. Due consideration needs to be given by the restorers/counsellors to the gravity of the initial offence or problem area, the apparent degree of repentance, the areas of new responsibility, the size of the restoring church and other associated factors.

c. The Restorers/Counsellors

These are to be two ministers who have held a National Ministers credential for at least 5 years. We are looking for maturity of experience and an excellent track record.

Galatians 6:1-2 provides the authorisation, qualifications and spiritual attitudes for practitioners of restoration.

The restorers should offer assistance to the local Oversight and any offended parties as is required.

d. State Chairman's Role

The State Chairman does not need to be involved in all the restorative process but does need to be updated by the two ministers at least quarterly during the restorative period. The two restorative ministers need to have the State Chairman's endorsement before commencing work.

e. National Chairman's Role

The National Chairman does not need to be involved in all the restorative process but does need to be sufficiently informed by the State Chairman every six months during the restorative process of ministers who were holding a credential issued by the National Executive. (refer to Ministry Guidelines document for Issuing Bodies for different credential types)

f. State Executives, State Councils, National Executive, National Council

These bodies do not need to be directly involved and confidentiality needs to apply during the restorative process. It is assumed that State Executives, State Councils, National Executive and National Council have absolute confidence in their State Chairmen and in their National Chairman.

g. Resource for all State Chairmen

Restorees could be required to attend or study specific remedial courses targeted to the breakdown area.

A resource kit is to be made available which includes key articles, books and case studies with the important acknowledgment that all counsel, advice, and directions given must not contravene Scripture and that restoring ministers prayerfully seek the leading and wisdom of the Holy Spirit on the matter.

h. Consideration of Errant Minister's Spouse

It should be recognized that the spouse of a minister who has had to be disciplined will need special support, encouragement and counsel. During the restorative process for the minister, the restorers / counsellors should ensure that the minister's spouse receives appropriate care and counsel.

5.3 Spouse Committing Transgression

In the event of the spouse of a credentialled minister committing a moral or financial misdemeanour of the nature that would require discipline and restoration if a pastor committed such an act, the minister and the spouse shall be:

- (i) Responsible to advise the State Chairman;
- (ii) Placed under the covering of a Nationally credentialed minister (for at least 5 years) normally for a 2 year period to assist in working through the situation.

6. CARE OF ADULT VICTIM(S)

Compassionate attention needs to be given to the victim(s) of any misdemeanour by a minister. Any victims should receive comfort, counsel and encouragement as appropriate. Victims should not feel that their well-being is considered of lesser importance than the restoration of the minister responsible for their hurt. Refer to the CRC Guidelines document 'CRC Ministry Code of Ethics' for further support regarding Adult Duty of Care.

If any victim is a child or youth (under the age of 18) then there is both a legal and moral obligation to report any criminal, suspected criminal or negligent behaviour to the appropriate secular authorities. Refer to the 'CRC Duty of Care and Child Protection Guidelines' for futher information on how to report, or contact the CRC National or State office for support.

FINALLY

The same general principles of discipline and restoration are expected to be applied for the spouses of a minister and for all in senior lay leadership who are fulfilling key ministry roles within our churches, ie. elders, ministry department leaders.

Amended and endorsed by the National Executive, September 1993

Drafted by Bill Vasilakis

*Amended 25th February 2007 – reference to “CRC Churches International”
amended to “CRC Churches International – Australia”*

*Updated April 2017 by Peter Gillard – fixing of references to Constitution which
were incorrect due to changes since publishing.*

*Updated June 2017 by Bill Vasilakis and Peter Gillard – endorsed by National
Executive October 2017*

End Document

A STATEMENT ON DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE in relation to Ministerial Credentialing within the CRC Churches International

Introduction

The CRC Churches International regards the unscriptural lowering of the standards of marriage and the easy nature of acquiring divorce in our nation with great concern.

The violation of God's clear standards as stated in His Word causes great hurt to individuals, to the family unit, to the social fabric of our society and to the cause of Christ.

We believe in the Biblical pattern of one monogamous, heterosexual marriage where each party is to mutually complement and build up each other and where the husband is to give loving sacrificial leadership and the wife is to give loving submission to this leadership. The marriages of our credentialed ministers and their spouses are to model this pattern to their congregations and society.

Where a person applying to become a credentialed minister has been previously married and then divorced and perhaps remarried it is essential that beliefs, values and lifestyle have been established to clearly affirm and demonstrate our Biblical convictions regarding marriage.

However we recognise there is Biblical validity to divorce and remarriage in certain circumstances eg. adultery, sexual deviancy, abandonment, domestic violence, addictions like alcohol, substance abuse and gambling etc. Jesus' statement in Matthew 19:1-12 (that God allows divorce in certain circumstances because of hardness of heart) and Paul's guidelines in 1 Corinthians 7:1-16 apply.

In the light of the principles outlined in this paper, our credentialed ministers are also requested to take great care in the process of remarrying Christians who have been previously divorced.

This document needs to be read and applied in conjunction with the Restoration and Discipline of Ministry document (refer to CRC Ministry Manual for this document).

1. On people seeking ministry credentialing who were divorced or lived in a defacto relationship prior to becoming Christians.

- 1.1 Special attention must be given by the ministry accrediting authority as to the reasons for their marital breakdown and the level of healing and restoration that has been effected in the candidate. The following questions must be satisfactorily answered:-
 - Who was the more responsible party for the failure?
 - What character flaws and behavioural factors were involved with both parties?
 - What steps have been taken to reconcile past conflicts with the previous spouse and children?
 - What changes have taken place in the person's life since their conversion?
 - What are the person's attitudes to the sanctity of marriage?
 - Are the ministry candidates laxidaisical with regard to divorce and could they bring in an element of compromise with the Word of God?
- 1.2 No divorced and remarried person should be considered for ministry credentialing unless they have shown a consistent pattern of stability and faithfulness with regard to their second marriage. This would normally be required for a period of five years.
- 1.3 In normal circumstances a person who has been divorced two or more times will not be considered for a ministry credential. If there are to be any exceptions to this, special consultations must occur with the National Executive before the State Credentialing authority makes any decision.
- 1.4 If a person who has been credentialed as a divorced person remarries they will be required to be under the covering of a Nationally Credentialed minister (of at least 5 years standing in the Movement) for a five year period to ensure the satisfactory establishment of the new marriage. The relevant credentialing authority may determine that this time period of specific covering be extended.

2. Statement regarding Christian people who divorce or have lived in a defacto relationship and desire to enter CRC ministry

- 2.1 Christian people who, because of a consistent pattern of marital infidelity and disloyalty, cause their marriage to dissolve, will not normally be eligible to become ordained credentialled ministers within the CRC Churches International.
- 2.2 Christian people who, because of a consistent pattern of hardness of heart (as witnessed by responsible pastors and spiritual oversight) cause their spouse to divorce them, or they to divorce their spouse, will not normally be eligible for a CRC Ministry Credential.

- 2.3 An aggrieved and faithful Christian man or woman whose spouse divorces them or forces them to initiate divorce proceedings shall be eligible to remarry and enter CRC ministry. The following conditions are to apply in these instances:
- 2.3.1 That the aggrieved and faithful party receive the protective covering of responsible pastors and spiritual oversight throughout the dissolution of their marriage.
 - 2.3.2 That these responsible spiritual counsellors endorse the spiritual soundness of the aggrieved and faithful party and endorse them as responsible Christians who have done everything in their power to save their Christian marriage.
 - 2.3.3 For those who are remarried the Credentialing process should begin after the person has proven a stability and faithfulness in their second marriage normally for at least three years.
 - 2.3.4 That an existing divorced minister who has fulfilled the expectations of Items 2.3, 2.3.1 and 2.3.2; should they choose to remarry, is to come under the covering of a Nationally Credentialed minister (of at least 5 years standing in the Movement) normally for a three year period to ensure the satisfactory establishment of the new marriage.

3. Avoiding conflicts of interest during the credentialing process

- 3.1 A Nominating Minister who is endorsing a previously divorced candidate should recuse themselves if they are also on the State Credentialing committee deciding on the application. This will ensure that there is not a conflict of interest and the process has total objectivity.

FINALLY

Whilst it is accepted that some circumstances are more complex than others, the respective Credentialing committee will deal with each case on its individual merits and that the standard required for Ministry should never be compromised.

Drafted by Pastor Bill Vasilakis.

Amended and endorsed by the National Executive in September 1993.

Updated by Pr Bill Vasilakis in May 2017. Endorsed by National Executive October 2017.

End Document

**DUTY of CARE and CHILD
PROTECTION GUIDELINES**



**CORE
GUIDELINES
DOCUMENT**

January 2016

Duty of Care & Child Protection Guidelines

Australia

Endorsed October 2014 by
CRC National Council

Duty of Care & Child Protection

Guidelines

CRC Churches International Australia

PREAMBLE

CRC Churches International Australia is committed to maintaining high moral and ethical integrity of its churches and ministers. It is vital that ministers understand the Biblical, Legal & Ministry requirements for themselves and for every local church to provide a child* safe environment for children and young people under their care.

Endorsed by CRC Churches Australian National Council in October 2014, the following guidelines have been adapted & updated from: *Recommended Guidelines for Duty of Care (May, 2003)*. They are provided to help each local church in our CRC family understand that they are responsible for the health and safety of children and teenagers under their care; to assist local churches in developing and implementing their own policy for Duty of Care; and, to make every CRC church aware they must do all in their power to protect those in their care from all forms of abuse.

Each CRC church is encouraged to develop and or review their current Duty of Care policy in accordance with these guidelines and set in place necessary changes. Churches are also encouraged to review, update and record the endorsement of their Duty of Care policy annually – in line with any changes to their State / Territory legislation and any future updates to these guidelines (as endorsed by CRC Churches Australian National Council).

In the event a local church does not set in place sufficient policies that ensure legal compliance with their State's Child safe environment / Child Protection Legislation and Best Practice according to these guidelines, no responsibility will be held by CRC Churches International or CRC Australia National Executive for failure to do so.

Minister's should therefore ensure they understand and outwork their own local church Duty of Care policy recognising that in this matter it's vital we are not just legally complying, but are endeavouring to be beyond reproach.

*Child refers to any young person under the age of 18.

There are a number of actions that churches will need to undertake in order to outwork this policy. This will need to happen at leadership level, at board level and at youth or children's leaders' level.

 This symbol will be used throughout this policy as an indication that some action needs to be undertaken. When you reach these points in the document **STOP** and consider how you will outwork the recommendations given.

Duty of Care Compliance Requirements for Credentialed CRC Ministers

4

A resolution was passed at the last CRC National Council meeting held on October 1, 2015 at Kingston City Church regarding Duty of Care compliance for all CRC Ministers holding a credential, including those holding Retired credentials. This is to provide the best care we can for those most vulnerable in our communities, children and young people.

The resolution is (quoted); “That all CRC Ministers be required to have an up-to-date police check and have relevant, recent training pertaining to Duty of Care for Children and Youth in order to have a CRC credential. A phase-in period will be allowed, which will be until June 30, 2016, to give all CRC Credentialed Ministers the opportunity to fulfill this new requirement.”

Details to support credentialed ministers in becoming and remaining compliant with this resolution is available on the CRC website, as a part of the Ministry Manual (crcchurches.org ... navigate to Document Library) or by contacting the CRC National Office.

*“The test of the morality of
a society is what it does for
its children.”*

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: German theologian and renowned Lutheran Pastor killed in a Nazi concentration camp; author, The Cost of Discipleship.

CONTENTS PAGE

5

- 3 Preamble
- 4 Duty of Care Compliance Requirements for Credentialed CRC Ministers
- 5 Contents
- 6 Introduction
- 8 Children's Charter
- 9 Child Safe Organisations
- 10 **Step 1 – Understanding Child Abuse**
- 12 **Step 2 – Develop and Maintain an Open and Aware Culture**
- 15 **Step 3 – Identify Risks and Dangers to Children**
- 17 **Step 4 – Know your legal and CRC responsibilities**
- 19 **Step 5 – Create Clear Boundaries**
- 22 **Step 6 – Adopt Best Practice in Selection and Appointment**
- 23 **Step 7 – Make CRC guidelines for responding to children and young people available to team members**
- 24 **Step 8 – Managing allegations of abuse**
- 24 **Step 9 – Develop a Critical Incident Response Plan**
- 25 **Step 10 – Provide education and ongoing training to all participants appropriate to their role**
- 27 **Step 11 – Empower children and young people and encourage their participation in creating a child safe culture**
- 27 **Step 12 – Utilise (or develop) a system to track endorsements and training progress**
- 28 Resource links
- 29 Summary of Online resources

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much gratitude goes to Pr Cass Tompich and Kymberli Boemia, both from Christian Family Centre Seaton for the many hours of time and their wonderful expertise in putting the lion's share of this set of guidelines together. The CRC Movement is lucky to have them.

Thanks also to Jane Philpot, a volunteer in the National Office, for the time and effort spent in editing and cross-referencing to produce the booklets in the current form.

INTRODUCTION

6

Child protection is a significant issue in today's society and the Christian Church is not exempt from this responsibility. Every effort must be taken to eliminate the potential for child abuse and do all in our power to create child safe environments within our local churches.

Effective child protection requires a holistic approach from government entities, non government entities and members of the community. While the focus of identification of child abuse or neglect must remain strong we must additionally adopt approaches that involve early intervention and prevention.

In the past we have maintained a loving and open acceptance of all people, trusting that as they become 'new creations' (2 Corinthians 5:17) in the image of Jesus Christ, that such things as mistrust and abuse will not occur. Unfortunately this is not always the case.

Children and young people are extremely valued by our Heavenly Father and those in our care must be protected to the best of our ability. For this reason, as well making sure we are outworking due diligence and remaining effective witnesses for Christ, we present these guidelines for your use.

The guidelines below provide comprehensive, although not exhaustive, guidelines to assist each local church in being vigilant to ensure that the children and young people under their care are protected and safe. Individual churches are to outwork reasonable care for children in their own ministry location & programs and may be required by law to account how they have demonstrated / are demonstrating this care. As a minimum CRC Churches are to include the ***CRC Code of Practice for Interactions with Children, Youth and the General Public (Booklet 2); CRC Standard Procedures for Running a Children's or Youth Program (Booklet 3)*** and; ***CRC Standard Procedures for Responding to Suspected Abuse (Booklet 4)*** in their own Duty of Care & Child Protection. In the event of any abuse within specific programs or ministries it is important that appropriate actions are taken immediately (*See Booklet 4, Pages 4 and 5*).

It is also vital to familiarise yourself with relevant state legislation regarding Mandatory Notification (*see Core Guidelines Document Page 17*) and screening requirements for staff and volunteers. Go through the Best Practice Guidelines outlined in this document with your leadership team and involve your Board of Elders. (*See Core Guidelines Document Page 7*)

Children's Ministry Leaders/Volunteers and Youth Leaders/Volunteers, as well as CRC ministers and Eldership teams must also be aware that they could be held liable in a court of law and face possible fines if they fail to report suspected child abuse/neglect or fail to manage allegations of abuse in a legal, transparent or timely way.

As such, all leaders and volunteers in Children & Youth Ministries and those currently holding any form of CRC Credential must familiarise themselves regarding how to make a report to their relevant reporting authority. They must also be appropriately screened and also outwork their local church policy, procedures and training requirements.

Senior Ministers / Lead Pastors and Eldership teams need to have a clear plan for responding to and managing allegations of abuse effectively (*Booklet 7, Pages 7 to 9*) by knowing how to:

- Outwork their duty of care compassionately
- Attend to immediate needs of victim(s) and offer ongoing support
- Liaise with & take advice from relevant authorities as required
- Communicate wisely with Parents/Carers and other parties affected
- Diligently protect other potential victims from harm
- Follow legal due process in relating to alleged abusers
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality

CRC National Council has adopted as Best Practice for all CRC churches:

1. Leaders and volunteers in Children's / Youth ministries (including those who have access to contact details / medical information of children and youth in specific programs / ministry events)

AND

All ordained CRC trainee ministers, ministers and national ministers...

...are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect that has occurred, or is likely to occur, to their relevant reporting authority (see Booklet 4, pages 9 and 10).* This is our practice even if those outlined above are not mandated by individual state /territory legislation to report.

2. Any person working with children or young people under age 18, and all CRC trainee ministers, ministers and national ministers will undergo a screening process before they are appointed / credentialed which will require an interview, a National Police Check/Working with Children Check and the completion of forms.

3. Children/youth ministry leaders and volunteers and all those holding a current CRC credential will be required by their local churches to undergo Mandated Notification training & refresher updates as relevant to their role.

4. Each local church is responsible for tailoring/outsourcing Mandatory Notification training relevant to the ministry role /level of responsibility of those who require it.

Jesus clearly demonstrated his loving concern for children in Matthew 18 and we must take seriously Paul's direction to: "*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!*" (Acts 20:28-31)

We affirm that we have a legal and moral obligation to protect and care for our children, and as a family of CRC churches we expect each local church to be diligent in this regard.

*A child or young person is defined as any person under age of 18 years of age.

CHILDREN'S CHARTER

NURTURE OF THE CHILD

"Children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a gift" (Psalm 127:4)

The church is called:

- To receive, nurture and treasure each child as a gift from God
- To acknowledge and support the role of parents as primary nurturers of children
- To proclaim the Gospel to children in ways that empower them to receive and respond to Christ's love
- To give high priority to the quality of planning and preparation for all children's ministry and to the support of Parents/Carers and those who minister with them
- To include children as full participants in the worshipping community and in the Church's common life of prayer, witness and service

MINISTRY TO THE CHILD

"Then Jesus took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them and blessed them" (Mark 10:16)

The church is called to:

- Love, shelter, protect and defend children within its own community and in the world, especially those who are abused, neglected or in danger
- Nurture and support families in caring for their children, acting in their children's best interest, and recognizing and fostering their children's spirituality and unique gifts

- Embrace children who seek Christian nurture independently of their Parents/Carer's participation in the church, while maintaining communication with parents and seeking consent for their child's involvement where required.
- Advocate for the integrity of childhood and the dignity of all children at every level of our religious, social, political, educational and economic structures

9

MINISTRY OF THE CHILD

"A little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:61)

The church is called to:

- Receive children's unique gifts
- Value the influence of a child's faith within his/her own family
- Value children's ministry within their own family network
- Foster community beyond the family unit, in which children, youth and adults know each other by name, minister to each other, and are partners together in serving Christ in the world
- Appreciate children's abilities and readiness to represent Christ and his Church, to witness to him wherever they may be, and according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world, and to take their place in the life, worship and decision-making of the church

Child Safe Organisations

What is a Child Safe Organisation?

A child safe organisation is committed to protecting children in its care. It understands the nature and risks of child abuse and has an open and aware culture. Child abuse can be discussed and reported safely. Policies and procedures are developed to protect children and staff/volunteers. Establishing and maintaining a child safe environment is a vital consideration in all of its activities and management practices. A child safe organisation will develop child protection policy and procedures. It will put policy into practice, ensuring all service users and participants are aware of organisational policy and commitment to child protection. In an organisation with a culture of child safety, voicing a concern is not viewed as an accusation. Staff and volunteers will have confidence that their concerns will be dealt with confidentially in a responsible and prompt way.¹

¹ From 12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations – Child Wise www.childwise.net

Established in 1991, Child Wise is one of Australia's leading not-for-profit child sexual abuse prevention organisations. Child Wise has achieved significant recognition and credibility within the sector and from Government for our award winning and innovative prevention programs primarily focused on creating child safe organisations.

In Australia a *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* is currently underway, with the first report from this inquiry due 30th June 2014. The Commissioners, chaired by Justice Peter McClellan AM, will look at all of the institutions where child sexual abuse took place. This includes institutions that have closed down. They will ask whether institutions have done a good job to stop child sexual abuse from happening.

Specifically the Commissioners will ask whether institutions are:

1. *Aware that abuse can happen;*
2. *Know if abuse is happening,*
3. *Tell Police or other authorities if abuse is happening and;*
4. *Prevent abuse from happening again.*

Based on their findings, they will then make recommendations concerning the law, government plans or policies and the way institutions are to operate to protect children and prevent child abuse. Future recommendations from this Royal Commission and how they apply to CRC Churches Australia will be carefully considered. As part of our CRC Churches Australian National Council's commitment to protecting children and preventing abuse, these guidelines are intended for use as an ongoing reference for each local church. They also provide a step by step guide that each local church leadership team can outwork in the process of building a child safe culture within their church.

Steps 1–4: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY – *where to start?*

Step 1: Understand Child Abuse

"Understanding child abuse is the first step in building a child safe organisation. To protect children in your care you need to know the potential risks and indicators of child abuse. It is only with this knowledge and understanding that you can develop effective child protection policies and child abuse prevention practices." Child Wise Booklet, [12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations](#) - www.childwise.net

What is Child Abuse?

A widely held definition for abuse of a child is suggested by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect:

"Child abuse is the proportion of harm to children that results from human action that is proscribed, proximate and preventable." (Finkelhor and Korbin 1988)

Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission (i.e., abuse) (Bromfield, 2005; Christoffel, et al., 1992).

A Child Focused Approach

*It is imperative for us to always maintain a **child focus** when considering child abuse and neglect. A child focus means that we look first at what the effect of the situation is on the child, presently and in the future. That is opposed to an adult focus which focuses on the adult offender and looks for reasons to excuse their abusive behaviour. It is never the child's fault that abuse has occurred. The adult (or minor offender under age 18) must always be held accountable for their behaviour.*

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 1 – Child Abuse ... Understanding and Awareness

This accompanying booklet fully explains the latest understanding of child abuse.

 Go thorough Booklet 1 together as a team (as a leadership team, the Board of Elders, and as a group of youth or children's leaders). Discuss the definitions of child abuse together. Were there any new discoveries? Make sure that everyone in leadership and everyone working with children have a common understanding about what is defined as child abuse. **Every new person in leadership and every new child worker should go through this process as a part of their induction into their role.**

Step 2 – Develop and maintain an open & aware culture

12

"Child abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent child abuse in your organisation you need to develop and maintain an open and aware culture. Staff, volunteers and children need to be aware of appropriate/inappropriate behaviour. They need to feel encouraged and safe to raise any concerns. If all participants are aware of child abuse and the organisation encourages open discussion and scrutiny, it becomes more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden." Child Wise Booklet, 12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations - www.childwise.net

Rights of Children Parents/Carers and Team/Members/Church Leaders:

Children have the right to:

- Be safe
- Be listened to
- Be respected
- Privacy
- Take calculated risks in a protected setting
- An inclusive environment

Parents / Carers have the right to:

- Be informed
- Listened to

Team Members / Church Leaders have the right to:

- Be respected
- Be listened to
- Be safe
- Be supported
- On-going information and training on all aspects of child protection & prevention

 Have the church and children's leadership teams complete the evaluation tool below.

13

Strategise how you will improve any areas that fall below a satisfactory score

Evaluate How Child Safe Your Local Church *Really* Is

On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being '**never**' and 10 being '**always**':

1. *Are you welcoming and respectful towards children, young people and their parents / caregivers?*

Never [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10] Always

2. *Are you respecting staff/ volunteers by providing support, training and clear guidelines to do their roles well?*

Never [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10] Always

3. *Are you identifying potential risks to children?*

Never [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10] Always

4. *Are you working continuously to prevent and reduce these risks?*

Never [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10] Always

5. *Are you transparent with Parents / Carers and welcoming of their feedback?*

Never [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10] Always

6. *Are you valuing children by asking their ideas / views and also listening to them?*

Never [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10] Always

Strategies to Develop and Maintain an Open & Aware Culture

14

- *Be preventative* rather than reacting to an unfortunate incident after it happens
- *Understand and act* on the moral and legal imperatives of protecting children in your care
- *Acknowledge the damage* an incident of abuse would do to the child and their family, people within and outside your local church, as well as with the witness of the church itself.
- Introduce safeguards that will protect children, staff, volunteers and your local church
- *Have clear boundaries* of roles between staff/volunteers and children
- *Be open* to outside accountability
- *Have adequate staff/volunteers*, staff supervision and training
- *Recognise and act* on children's rights
- *Know* that your local church is doing all that it can to protect children

A child safe organisation is created by putting in place the above strategies. Individually, each strategy reduces the risk of harm to children, but collectively they create child safe organisations and prevent child abuse.

Each step in these guidelines are intended to help you build a child safe culture in your church.

Step 3 – Identify risks / dangers to children

15

"Once you are aware of how and why child abuse occurs you need to consider the risks to children in your organisation and programs. Risk management is child abuse prevention. You need to identify potential risks and ways children can be harmed in your organisation. Only by identifying risks can you develop strategies to minimise and prevent child abuse. Risk means the potential for something to go wrong. Risk management means identifying the potential for an accident or incident to occur and taking steps to reduce the possibility of it occurring. Risk management is a generic process that can be applied to the prevention of child abuse." - Child Wise Booklet, 12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations - www.childwise.net

A Risk Management Process should identify risk and also identify preventative strategies.



Have the church and children's leadership teams complete the evaluation tool below.

Discuss the means and timeline for eliminating any unacceptable risk factors that you discover.

Identify Risks

Identify risks by considering the following questions:

1. In which areas do children's programs or church activities involving children take place?
(Take into consideration all areas where specific programs are run as well as where unplanned or church social gatherings occur.)
2. What risks are present in each area?
(Observations should include the physical structure of each area to determine accessibility to children, safety and comfort)
3. Analyse the consequences of each identified risk
4. Determine what issues are most likely to occur and how often

Identify Preventative Strategies

16

Control risks by considering the following questions:

1. What risk reducing actions need to be implemented to protect children and prevent abuse?
2. Who will be the appointed person(s) responsible for overseeing these actions?

Review and Revise by regularly asking:

1. Are the risks / potential dangers to children that we've identified still current?
2. Are there any further risks that have been identified?
3. Are the agreed measures to control risks being implemented?
4. Are the agreed measures to control risks effective?

Communicate and consult with all teams involved on a regular basis to build commitment and increase implementation.

Step 4 – Know your legal responsibilities & CRC responsibilities

17

"Organisations providing services to children and young people are increasingly facing legal action for abuse of children in their care. They can also face legal action over their response to allegations of child abuse. In addressing allegations of child abuse the organisation needs to prove that they have taken "all reasonable steps" (doing as much as possible) to prevent any abuse. Organisations may be held liable for failure to prevent 'foreseeable' abuse. An organisation's failure to take "reasonable steps" to prevent abuse may be construed as a contributing factor to the abuse. A claim of negligence may then be made for breach of 'duty of care'." Child Wise Booklet, [12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations - www.childwise.net](http://www.childwise.net)

State / Territory Laws Regarding Mandatory Reporting

STATE	MANDATORY REPORTING LEGISLATION
ACT	Section 356 of the Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
NSW	Sections 23 and 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
NT	Sections 15 and 26 of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)
QLD	Section 148 of the Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD), Sections 191–192 and 158 of the Public Health Act 2005 (QLD), Section 20 of the Commission for Children Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (QLD)
SA	Section 11 of the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
TAS	Sections 13 and 14 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (TAS)
VIC	Sections 182(1) a–e, 184 and 162 c–d of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)
WA	Section 160 of the Western Australia Family Court Act 1997 (WA); Regulation 20 of the Child Care Services Regulations 2006; Regulation 19 of the Child Care Services (Family Day Care) Regulations 2006; Regulation 20 of the Child Care Services (Outside School Hours Family Day Care) Regulations 2006; Regulation 21 of the Child Care Services (Outside School Hours Care) Regulations 2006, Section 124B of the Children and Community Services Act 2004

***NOTE – GO TO BOOKLET 4, pages 9 to 10 for the relevant Reporting Authority for your State / Territory**

CRC Best Practice

18

CRC Churches Australian National Council has adopted as Best Practice for all CRC churches:

1. Leaders and volunteers in Children's / Youth ministries (including those who have access to contact details / medical information of children and youth in specific programs / ministry events)

AND

All ordained CRC trainee ministers, ministers and national ministers...

...are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect that has occurred, or is likely to occur, to their relevant reporting authority. This is our practice even if those outlined above are not mandated by individual state/territory legislation to report.

2. Any person working with children or young people under age 18 and all CRC trainee ministers, ministers and national ministers will undergo a screening process before they are appointed / credentialed which will require an interview, a National Police Check/Working with Children Check and the completion of forms.

3. Children/youth ministry leaders and volunteers and all those holding a current CRC credential will be required by their local churches to undergo Mandated Notification training & refresher updates as relevant to their role.

4. Each local church is responsible for tailoring/outsourcing mandatory notification training relevant to the ministry role / level of responsibility of those who require it.

STEPS 5-7: Developing a Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy – *protecting children and preventing abuse*

19

Step 5 – Create Clear Boundaries

"Once your organisation has identified risks to children in your care you need to implement policies and procedures to address and minimise those risks. The framework is a Child Protection Policy. A Child Protection Policy is a statement of your commitment to child safety and outlines the strategies of how the organisation will meet this commitment. It will provide guidance to the everyday practices and longer term work of your organisation. Your policy is also a way to describe your commitment to child protection. The role of policy is to provide principles, and to guide decisions and action on child protection issues. Everyone benefits from a Child Protection Policy that provides clear direction and a pre-planned uniform approach to issues that arise." Child Wise Booklet, 12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations - www.childwise.net

Know What to Include

A Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy should include:

- Your church's / organisation's commitment to child protection and prevention of abuse
- Definitions and Behavioural Indicators of child abuse
- Some information about offenders
- Mandated Notifiers
- How your church will screen and endorse people entrusted to work with / have access to children
- How to identify risks and put preventative strategies in place
- Reporting suspected abuse to relevant state/territory authority
- How to inform your leadership team of reports made
- Team Leader responsibilities for running a safe program
- Clear process for how to raise and report concerns
- How your leadership team will support:
 - Children who have experienced abuse;
 - Staff who have allegations made against them;
 - Parents/Carers who have raised complaints or whose children have been abused;
 - Other participants and workers affected by the situation
- How Team Members should respond when bullying is identified

- How Team Members can offer support for children/young people dealing with Mental Health issues
- How Team Members can help children / young people at risk of suicide
- First steps response plan in the event of critical incidents
- Expectations re ongoing training

A Duty of Care and Child Protection Policy is a living document. You must ensure your practice is consistent with your policy, and is regularly revised and updated.

Develop a Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct (also known as a Code of Behaviour or Behaviour Protocol/Guideline) is a central element of developing your church's Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy. A Code of Conduct is a straightforward list of do's and don'ts for staff and volunteers. It minimises grey areas, highlights inappropriate behaviours and lets everyone know the rules.

A Code of Conduct Should Address:

- Physical contact/touching
- Sign in/sign out procedures
- Respect for privacy
- Confidentiality
- Language
- Favouritism/'special' relationships
- Perceptions & appearances
- Out of hours contact
- Discipline/Behaviour Management
- Cultural sensitivity
- Bullying
- Adult/child ratios
- Consideration of Children with Special Needs
- Sleeping arrangements
- Reporting concerns
- Social Media / Online Behaviour
- Toileting and bathing arrangements
- Safety Factors

A Code of Conduct clearly describes appropriate behaviours when relating to children within church programs/activities /ministries (and what are inappropriate behaviours). It sets out clear boundaries for staff/volunteers, parents/caregivers and all participants that limit the risk of child abuse

occurring, promote accountability, and, provide direction for anyone working with children/young people.

21

Anyone who is given responsibility to work with or have access to children or young people as part of your church needs to know how they are expected to relate to children/youth in their care at all times. Your Code of Conduct must clearly outline how your church expects team members to interact with children, parents/caregivers and the public, as representatives of your church.

At a minimum your church's Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy should include the information provided in Booklets 2, 3 and 4 accompanying this Main Policy Document. These are:

Booklet 2 - *CRC Code of Practice for Interactions with Children, Youth and the General Public*

Booklet 3 - *CRC Standard Procedures for Running a Children's or Youth Program*, and;

Booklet 4 - *CRC Standard Procedures for Responding to Suspected Abuse*.

It is imperative that the guidelines in these three booklets are implemented in all CRC Churches across Australia.

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 2 – CRC Code of Practice for Interactions with Children, Youth and the General Public

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 3 – CRC Standard Procedures for Running a Children's or Youth Program

These accompanying booklets all provide vital information about various aspects of the Duty of Care process.

 Go thorough Booklets 2 and 3 together as a team (as a leadership team, the Board of Elders, and as a group of youth or children's leaders). Discuss the information included. What changes do you need to make to ensure that these guidelines are followed from here on? Make sure that everyone in leadership and everyone working with children have a common understanding about what is needed to provide adequate Duty of Care to children in all your church's activities. **Every new person in leadership and every new child worker should go through this process as a part of their induction into their role.**

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 4 – CRC Standard Procedures for Responding to**Suspected Abuse**

22

 The leadership team of the church and of the children's and youth workers should familiarise themselves with this document, which will need to be used if any abuse is suspected. **Choose one of your key leaders to be a 'Responding to Abuse' expert, who knows this process well. They can then offer speedy and correct advice if any issues arise.**

Step 6 - Adopt Best Practise in Selection & Appointment

"To be child safe, children's organisations need to employ the best applicants for both paid and unpaid positions. Use the recruitment and selection process to attract positive role models for children and people who will embrace the child protection principles of your organisation. Organisations also need to be vigilant in their recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to reduce the risk of employing unsuitable people. Child sex offenders will target organisations that are unaware of the risks and dangers of child abuse and who conduct little or no screening. Organisations need to adopt a structured and systematic approach to recruitment and selection for all staff and volunteers." Child Wise Booklet, [12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations](#) - www.childwise.net

Many potential instances of child abuse can be avoided if the correct people are appointed to work with children and youth, and the inappropriate people are prevented from doing so. Therefore, the process of selection and appointment of people to work in this area is crucial.

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 5 – Best Practice in Selection and Appointment

 This booklet should be used to inform your process of selecting and appointing children's and youth workers. **The person or people responsible for this process should ensure that they have familiarised themselves with the recommendations of this booklet.**
Do you need to change your processes? If so, who will implement these changes?

Step 7 – Make CRC Guidelines for Responding to Children and Young People at Risk available to Team Members

23

CRC Guidelines for Responding to Children and Young People at Risk

The guidelines in Booklet 6 are to be made available to Team Members who work with or have access to children or young people in a ministry or program at your church. They are intended to help Team Members identify children or young people that may be dealing with bullying, declining mental health or are at risk of suicide and help Team Members know how to offer support and referral to professional help as required.

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 6 – Package for Team Members – Responding to Children and Youth at Risk

 Have a workshop or seminar with everyone in your church who works with children or youth. Go through this booklet together. Ensure that everyone understands their responsibility in their Duty of Care. Make this booklet a part of the induction process for all new workers in the child and youth areas.

NOTE – If your church is a part of the CHILDSAFE program, then this training can be undertaken online by all child and youth workers prior to starting with the teams.

Steps 8-9: Taking Action – *managing allegations of abuse & developing a critical response plan*

24

Step 8- Managing Allegations of Abuse²

Senior Ministers / Lead Pastors and Eldership teams need to have a clear plan for responding to and managing allegations of abuse effectively by knowing how to:

- Outwork their duty of care compassionately
- Attend to immediate needs of victim(s) and offer ongoing support
- Liaise with & take advice from relevant authorities as required
- Communicate wisely with Parents/Carers and other parties affected
- Diligently protect other potential victims from harm
- Follow legal due process in relating to alleged abuser
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality

Step 9 – Develop a Critical Incident Response Plan

Incidents happen to all of us even with careful planning and attention to safety. Some incidents are more serious than others. Critical incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Serious vehicle accidents
- Death of a participant
- Lost or significantly injured participant (I.e. lost for more than several hours, injuries requiring emergency evacuation)
- Natural tragedy (e.g. bushfire, flood)
- Significant violence between participants
- Sexual assault
- Participant engaging in significant self-harm
- Suicidal participant, attempted or actual suicide

² Adapted from *Guidelines For Managing Allegations of Sexual Abuse: Dabelle Inquiry 2013*, South Australia

CRC DUTY OF CARE BOOKLET 7 – Responding to Allegations of Abuse and Critical Incident Response

25

 As a leadership team for the church, or as a church board, go through this booklet. Be aware of the process and recommendations included. Utilise this booklet if there is a need to respond to any allegations to ensure that correct procedures are adhered to.

Steps 10-12: Preventative Measures – *ongoing training and evaluation*

Step 10 – Provide education and ongoing training to all participants appropriate to their role

“Education and training are fundamental tools in building a child safe organisation. Whether you are implementing new programs and policies or reinforcing existing ones, all staff, volunteers, children and their families should be informed and educated. This is another component of developing an open and aware culture and ensuring your risk management policies and procedures are widely understood and implemented. If participants do not know what to do, they will not be able to prevent child abuse. Training programs and education for staff and volunteers will reduce fear, suspicion and resistance to change. Training should be regarded as an important investment for every organisation as it improves the skills of staff and the quality of service. It is a necessary component of good management and should be provided to all staff, volunteers and participants. Training should be conducted regularly.” - Child Wise Booklet, 12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations - www.childwise.net

Develop & implement or outsource training specific to the role in which participants are involved in. Training that is well planned and specific to a person’s position is more likely to have a long lasting and beneficial impact.

All Team Members who are entrusted to work with or have access to children in a ministry or program in your church are required to undertake training specific to the role they are outworking. It will be helpful if you clearly outline in your Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy what level of training is expected and how often it will be required.

Each local church is responsible to determine and tailor segments of training necessary for each Team Member, Team Leader, Ministry Leader or Senior Leadership Team / Church Oversight member within the various ministry areas they are involved.

Specifically:

1. All Parents/Carers of children and young people should be encouraged to inform their children/young people about personal safety
2. Staff and volunteers should be provided with a copy of your church's **Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy** prior to commencing work with / having access to children or young people in any ministry/program of your church. They should also be trained on key elements of your policy including mandatory reporting, CRC best practice requirements, appropriate ways of relating and responding to children
3. Ministry Leaders and Team Leaders need to be trained on proper observation and ongoing screening of staff and volunteer performance to insure ongoing stability within all programs. They also need to be made aware of which Senior Leadership Team Members they are to approach to raise any concerns and be trained on what practical responsibilities they are to outwork when leading a Children's or Youth ministry/program/event/activity.
4. Senior Leadership Team Members and Church Oversight Members should be trained in how to manage allegations of abuse and how to implement & train Ministry Leaders/Team Leaders to outwork your church's critical incident plan if required.

It's important that staff and volunteers working with or having access to children and youth understand your church's responsibility to build a create child safe culture. Provide training at regularly set intervals. Develop refresher programs for updating topics which have been previously trained. This ensures all Team Members keep up to date with current child safe practices required. Training can be conducted in face to face small or large group sessions or be made available as an online module. Recognised prior learning can be given to those who have completed mandatory notification training as part of their education / health professional role (with a copy of the relevant certificate stored securely for your church records).

Training should be completed soon after the endorsement and commencement of each new role. It is the responsibility of your church to determine the specific timeframe for training to be completed.

Ministry Leaders should be required to complete a higher level of training in order to have specific insight into the various levels of training needed by each member of their team(s).

Face to face training can take place in large group settings combined with another church, or, at a specific time set aside within your church or ministry department(s) or with a small group of individual Team Members.

Step 11 - Empower Children/Young People & Encourage Their Participation in Creating a Child Safe Culture

27

Abuse is more common in organisations where children have no voice. To be child safe your church needs to empower children so they can speak their concerns. In building and maintaining a child safe environment it's vital to include and value the unique knowledge and experience of children and young people. Children and young people can identify strengths, weaknesses, risks and dangers in activities that may otherwise go undetected. Children's participation can mean that more risks are identified, the open and aware culture is expanded, and children feel safe to report abuse.

If children are consulted in decision making around your child protection policies and strategies they:

- Will be more committed to the policies and procedures
- Will gain a greater understanding of policies and procedures
- Will gain skills to speak up for themselves
- Will be better able to recognise dangers and risks and seek support and assistance.

So get their best thoughts, ask their opinions, get them involved and keep listening to their feedback.

Step 12 – Utilise (or develop) a system to track endorsements & training progress

If called to answer allegations of misconduct within the church, the best defence will be the documentation that can be provided to show that every reasonable step that could be taken to prevent misconduct within the church has been taken.

Each church should utilise or develop some form of database that will allow a delegated person(s) appointed by your Church Oversight to track the endorsement and training of all staff and volunteers and give regular reports on progress made or areas of concern. There should be no Team Members who are considered exceptions to your church's screening & endorsement process.



ChildSafe is a safety management system. People with different levels of responsibility access the various elements of our system to work safely with children and young people.

The three key elements are:

1. ChildSafe Standards provided in our [publications](#).
2. Training materials included in the publications and as online training.
3. Access to [Safety Management Online](#) for people at each level

For more information go to: <http://www.childsafe.org.au/why-consider-childsafe/>

Summary of online resources

29

All these resources can be downloaded in word and/or pdf format from the CRC website; crcchurches.org/docresources

A. Sample Referee Questionnaire 88

This questionnaire is useful for phone interviews/emailing referees as part of the church's screening process. It is a helpful tool in determining if an applicant is suitable to work with /have access to children or young people as part of your church ministries/programs.

B. Team Member Application Form

This form should be completed by all staff / volunteers who are applying to work directly or have access to children and youth in a program or ministry of your church. All Team Members should receive official Church Oversight endorsement prior to commencing work or having access to children or youth participants in any of your church's ministry/program.

C. Commonwealth of Australia Statute Declaration & List of Authorised Witnesses

Your Church Oversight may choose to ask Team Members (staff & volunteers) who are applying to work with or have access to children / youth as part of your church to sign a Commonwealth Statutory Declaration. This document must be signed by an authorised witness. A list of persons who are authorised to witness Commonwealth Stat Declarations is included.

D. U18 Medical Information Form

A medical information form should be completed for each child or young person under 18 involved as a participant in a ministry or program. A specific medical information form must be filled out for each extended activity, e.g., camp, hike, outreach trip.

E. Consent to Photograph Form

This form should be completed for each child or young person *prior* to the use of any photograph, digital image or recording of that child/young person in any publications, multi-media presentations or websites belonging to your church. For all ministries/programs with children or youth participants a *Consent to Photograph* form should be completed for each child or young person at the beginning of each year (annually).

F. Sample Annual Off-Site Activity Consent Form

An annual consent form should be completed for each child or young person that could be involved in off-site activities, at the beginning of each year's program.

G. Sample Extended Activity Offsite Consent Form

A specific notice & consent form should be completed by participants before any extended off-site activities such as camps or trips. Each extended activity offsite notice & consent form should be adapted to include information for Parents/Carers about the activity, date, time the activity commences and concludes, transport arrangements, pick-up and drop-off information, emergency contact information, supervision and permission to seek medical attention if required.

H. Accident & Incident Report Form

This form should be completed and handed into a Ministry Leader if:

- An accident occurs requiring the injured party to see a medical practitioner or first aid personnel.
- An incident occurs that may require an appropriate response from your local Leadership Team, such as physical safety issues, Team Leader or Team Member conduct or inadequate procedures.

I. First Aid Treatment Form

Administration of first aid should only be carried out by a person with a current First Aid Certificate; a medical doctor or a registered nurse. If no suitably trained person is available to administer first aid, outside medical treatment should be sought and in the case of an emergency, an ambulance called. The purpose of this form is to record each and every first aid treatment administered at your church.

J. Driver Declaration Form

Any person designated to transport under 18 participants as part of a ministry program at your church should be required to complete this form. This will allow your church to document that Team Leaders have exercised reasonable care in asking responsible adult drivers to undertake the transportation of participants and ensure designated drivers understand what is required of them.

- K. Sample Emergency Contact Details Sheet
- L. Sample Sign in / Sign Out Sheet (for Children's Ministry Program)
- M. Sample Critical Incident Details Form
- N. Sample Driver & Vehicle Registration Summary
- O. Team Member (18+) Medical Information Form
- P. Web Resources & References
- Q. References

“But when adults speak up for the vulnerable and the weak, working and demanding that safety and respect prevail, God's little lambs are protected and nourished. They know they are not abandoned; they are loved. And the world becomes a little more like heaven as a result.”

— Dr. [Wess Stafford](#)

Dr Wess Stafford: Former CEO of Compassion International & author of Too Small to Ignore: Why the Least of These Matter Most and; Just One Minute: In the Heart of a Child One Moment Can Last Forever.

28 August 2019

A resolution was passed at the CRC National Council meeting held on October 1, 2015 at Kingston City Church regarding Duty of Care compliance for all CRC Ministers holding a credential, including those holding Retired credentials. This is to provide the best care we can for those most vulnerable in our communities, children and young people.

The resolution is (quoted); “That all CRC Ministers be required to have an up-to-date police check and have relevant, recent training pertaining to Duty of Care for Children and Youth in order to have a CRC credential. A phase-in period will be allowed, which will be until June 30, 2016, to give all CRC Credentialled Ministers the opportunity to fulfill this new requirement.”

The National Executive, in its October 2015 meeting, made the decision to utilise a third-party online system to help with the administrative requirements of managing this new Duty of Care process.

The system we will be utilising is **Safety Management Online (SMO)** which is maintained by ChildSafe (a Scripture Union subsidiary). A number of CRC churches were already utilising this system to support their own church’s policy of training and checking of their children’s and youth workers.

Further to this, in the June 2016 National Executive meeting, it was resolved to alter the requirements for those holding a Retired Ministers Credential only. This will allow ministers holding this credential to only submit a “Working With Children Check” (or the equivalent in their state), with the recent relevant training requirement waived.

3 STEPS TO CRC DUTY OF CARE COMPLIANCE

Each CRC Minister will need to complete 3 steps in order to be compliant with these new procedures for holding a CRC Credential (except for the Retired Credential).

The purpose of this document is to clearly outline those 3 steps to allow you to successfully complete this process.

STEP 1 – SIGN UP

The National Office will enter each CRC Minister into the SMO system in our section of the site.

The following information will be entered for each person;

- Your firstname and surname
- Your email address
- A generic password (your username for the CRC Website where possible)

As this process is completed each minister will receive an email that looks like this;

Your Name
From: no-reply@smo.org.au Sent: Date/Date/Date Time To: Your email address Subject: Safety Management Online Access
Hi Your FirstName, You have been granted user access to Safety Management Online, a system that assists in the provision of safe people and safe programs.
Your access details are as follows: Organisation providing access: CRC Churches International Australia Person who has added you as a member: Peter Gillard Your Name: Your Name Username (usually an email address): your.email@email.com.au Initial Password (you can change this): genericpassword
You can access the system from your organisation's login page at crcchurches.smo.org.au Online help and video help is available within the system, and a User Guide can be downloaded from the Resources page.

1. click on the crcchurches.smo.org.au hyperlink to access the site; then
2. use the Username and Initial Password provided in the email to gain access to the site; then
3. Complete the rest of your Personal Information in the system. Type in a password you can remember (note: if you already have your email registered in the SMO system with another organisation, you will need to use a different password for the CRC site).
4. Save this information by clicking the UPDATE button at the top Right Hand side of the page.

STEP 2 – WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (OR EQUIVALENT)

These are the current state-by-state requirements for clearance for working with children;

ACT	A 'Working with Vulnerable People Background Check'
NSW	A 'NSW Working with Children Check'
NT	A 'Working with Children Check' (Ochre Card)
Queensland	A 'Working with Children Check' (Blue Card)
SA	A 'Working With Children Check' (formerly "DCSI Check")
Tasmania	A 'Working with Vulnerable People Check'
Victoria	A 'Working with Children Card'
WA	A 'Working with Children Check'

- If you already have a current WWCC (as per the table above) that has an expiry date at least 6 months from the current date, then;
 - SCAN YOUR WWCC DOCUMENT AND [EMAIL TO THE CRC NATIONAL OFFICE](#). The information about expiry dates will be entered into the system for you and a copy of the document uploaded into the secure SMO storage system.
 - Your WWCC will need to be updated every three years (or every 5 years in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria), so the expiry date in the SMO system will be set three (or five) years from the completion of the check. SMO will send you an email automatically 2/3 months prior to this expiry date to remind you to start the process of gaining a new check before it expires. Send copies of any new documentation to the CRC National Office.
- If you don't have a current WWCC with an expiry date at least 6 months from the current date, then you will need to contact your state authority to start the process of receiving one. Note that the cost of the WWCC is to be borne by the minister, or by their church. Once this process is complete then follow the instructions above to submit.

STEP 3 – CURRENT RELEVANT CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING (NOT NECESSARY FOR RETIRED MINISTERS)

Many ministers who also work in schools or chaplaincy will already have completed a relevant training course in order to undertake this other role. If this is the case, scan and forward your certificate of completion to the CRC National Office.

As you complete updates of this training, ensure you get a certificate on each occasion, and forward a copy to the CRC National Office to ensure ongoing compliance.

For those who have not done training previously, this can be done for free online utilising the SMO website. To do this;

- Log into your SMO page using your login details set up in Step 1 of this document.
- Click on the TRAINING tab on the left of your page
- There are 5 Training Units to be completed. These are;
 - M3 – Keeping Children and Vulnerable People Safe
 - L1 – The Childsafe SP3 Team Leader
 - L2 – Safety Management and Permission to Proceed
 - C1 – The ChildSafe Coordinator
 - CRC Duty of Care Distinctives
- Click on each individual unit to work through the reading and questions. All units must be completed.
- Once all units are satisfactorily completed, send an email to the CRC National Office to advise of completion, and your status will be updated to reflect this.
- This process will need to be done every 3 years to ensure you are around any changes to legislation or practice that happen from time to time.
- If you fail any units let the CRC National Office know as soon as possible. They will be able to reset the units so you can re-do them until satisfactorily completed.

The National Office also will occasionally hold a 1 day face-to-face training each year in conjunction with the National Conference, to allow those on the credential pathway to be compliant prior to gaining their Trainee or other first credential, or to train others in your church who have a leadership role with children or youth. This one day training is a suitable alternative to the online training for those who may prefer to utilise this method. Details will be on the CRC Website.

FINAL COMMENTS

Remember that all CRC Ministers will need to complete the steps outlined, and then continue to provide updated documentation to the CRC National Office in order to remain compliant. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments regarding this process. I will do all I can to support you to complete the 3 steps to CRC Duty of Care Compliance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Gillard".

Peter Gillard

National Administrator

CRC Churches International Australia Inc.

Lead Ministers & Eldership Boards



Operational Guidelines

by Pastor Bill Vasilakis

Part 1. ROLES AND AUTHORITY

... The Role and Authority of Lead Ministers and Church Eldership Boards

Part 2. RELATIONAL HEALTH

... The Absolute Priority and Need For Relational Health Between Lead Ministers and their Church Eldership Boards

- Endorsed by the Australian National Executive – March 2003
- Update to document endorsed by National Executive – June 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE NUMBER
INTRODUCTION	4
PART ONE – ROLES AND AUTHORITY	
... The Role and Authority of Lead Ministers and Church Eldership Boards	
1. The Genius of the Plurality of Leadership Principle	5-7
2. How can we outwork the New Testament Leadership Government Pattern?	7-8
3. Leaders must really lead their Eldership Boards and their Churches	9-12
4. Leaders must work responsibly through their teams	12-13
5. Leaders and Eldership Boards must be fully accountable to each other and to our CRC Denominational Family	13-15
6. Appointment and Dismissal powers of all church officers	15-16
7. Review of Elders' Functionality	17-18
8. Finance, Property and Legal Affairs	19
9. Salaries and Remunerations Matters	19-20
10. Constitutional Changes	20-21
11. Controversy and Conflict	21
12. Collegiate Leadership and Family Entanglements	22-26
... Flow Chart of Seaton CFC's Governmental Structure	27

PART TWO – RELATIONAL HEALTH
**... The Absolute Priority and Need For Relational Health Between Lead Ministers
and their Church Eldership Boards**

1. A good and very sound relationship must exist before the Lead Minister recommends someone for appointment	28
2. Never compromise 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9	28-29
3. 19 Biblical qualifications	29-32
4. Some crucially important values and attitudes to look for	32-34
5. Character check for Leaders	34-36
6. Some developmental and behavioural characteristics to look for	36
7. The need to personally pastor the Elders and their families	37
8. The need to be “up-front” regarding the expectations that Lead Ministers have for their Elders	37
9. The Elders and their relationship toward their Lead Minister	37-39
CONCLUSION	40
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	41-42
APPENDIX 1	43-52

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to answer seven very important questions that need some definitive answers.

1. What role and authority should a Lead Minister have in a local church?
... What's his/her job description?
2. What role and authority should a collective Board of Elders have in a local church?
... What's their collective job description?
3. Where do their roles and authority cross over? ... Where does one stop and the other start?
4. What are the spiritual and character requirements for Lead Ministers and Elders in a local church?
5. What's a tested and workable division of responsibilities for Lead Ministers and Eldership Boards?
6. What's the best and fairest system of accountability for Lead Ministers and Eldership Boards who belong to a denominational family like the CRC?
7. How can we create a preventative organisational framework that will be conducive to well ordered governmental practices and healthy relationships between Lead Ministers and Eldership Boards?

For over a forty years I have observed and been directly involved in trying to help local churches handle the fallout when Lead Ministers and their Eldership Boards fail to work together in love and unity. So often the breakdowns could have been prevented if both the Lead Ministers and Elders were crystal clear on their roles and had realistic expectations of each other in the outworking of their respective responsibilities. The most serious problems that our local churches face centre around these questions; and this document attempts to provide some Biblically grounded wisdom and practical help for our Lead Ministers and Eldership Teams as they walk through this potentially explosive minefield.

Bill Vasilakis
March 2003
June 2015 (New Edition)

PART ONE – ROLES AND AUTHORITY

... THE ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF LEAD MINISTERS AND CHURCH ELDERSHIP BOARDS.

1. THE GENIUS OF THE PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE

The New Testament teaches that there is to be a plurality of Leadership in all Local Churches. We see a picture of *Ministry Gifts* and *Elderships* working together in loving unity to advance the cause of Christ through local churches.

1.1 *The New Testament describes the functional role of Ministry Gifts and Elders but little else according to the following Scriptures.*

Ministry Gifts. Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:27-31;

1 Peter 4:10-11

Elderships. Acts 11:29-30; Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; Acts 20:28-35;

Acts 21:17-19; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7;

1 Timothy 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14

The division between Ministry-Gifts and Elders according to some commentators appears a little arbitrary. For example there appears to be no distinction drawn between Pastors/Shepherds in Ephesians 4:11 and Elders/Shepherds in Acts 20:28-35 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Though there are some problems with the more traditional view, there seems to be a differentiation between people who are *specially gifted* to operate a specific ministry role in the church; with others whose character qualification seems to be the predominant issue if they are to be on the government Eldership body of a church. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Some people like Peter and John operate as ministry-gifts (ie apostles) and can also be Elders in a governmental/leadership sense within a local church.

(1 Peter 5:1-3; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1)

'THE ROLE OF ELDERS'

"The New Testament is clear that the church is to be led by a plurality of godly leaders under the oversight and watchcare of Elders. The Elders are given ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true course biblically, that its members are being appropriately shepherded, that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching, and that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of other competent

and godly leaders. They are to care about the spiritual and physical well-being of members, regularly praying for the sick. They are to guard the body against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or who are continuing in patterns of sinful behaviour. In doing so, they are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community. Scripture indicates that the ultimate decision-making authority in the church rests with the Elders.

(1 Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9; James 5:14).

In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and submit to their leadership.

(Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-33; Acts 21:17-19)” (1.)

1.2 *It is fairly clear that Ministry Gifts like Paul, Barnabas and Titus appointed Elders, but we can only assume that they also had the spiritual authority to terminate those appointments. (Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5)*

We are simply not told how long the appointments were for and what procedures were in place to keep everyone (including Ministry Gifts and Elders) accountable. I need to note that the Greek Word “appoint” in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5, does have a fairly clear connotation that the membership of a congregation can be involved either in the actual selection, or in the confirmation of the appointment of elders. The Zondervan Study Bible note on Acts 14:23 sheds light on this unique word and the practice of the first church.

“Appointed. The Greek for this word (used also in 2 Cor. 8:19) can mean (1) to stretch out the hand, (2) to appoint by show of hands or (3) to appoint or elect without regard to the method. In 6:6 the appointment of the Seven included selection by the church and presentation to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. Because these were new churches, at least partly pagan in background, Paul and Barnabas may have both selected and appointed the elders.” (2.)

SELECTION OF ELDERS/TERM OF ELDERS

“Scripture gives evidence of the first Elders being appointed by the founders of the church. By this example it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be intimately involved in the process of selecting Elders to ensure that the selection is based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would therefore appear that freedom is given to the individual churches to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situations (Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5)”. (3.)

CRC History & Practice

The CRC’s Founder, Leo Harris, though strongly believing in the plurality of leadership concept as the New Testament’s way of operating, gives no practical guidelines on how to outwork this concept in any of his inspirational writings:
“VISION: - The Concept and Challenge of the CRC:”
“OPERATION OUTREACH: - The New Testament blueprint for Revival”
(CRC publications) (4.)

Dr Gilbert Bilezikian in his book “Christianity 101” (Zondervan 1993) has some thought-provoking ideas about Ministry and especially on church governance and the plurality of leadership concept of the New Testament Church. (Refer to Appendix 1) (5.)

2. HOW CAN WE OUTWORK THE NEW TESTAMENT LEADERSHIP GOVERNMENT PATTERN?

- 2.1 I have reflected at length over the years on these issues and have framed a workable operating structure that *clearly defines the specific role and the respective powers* of the Lead Minister and his/her collective Eldership (Board, Oversight, etc.).

The following principles and guidelines are not just theoretical but have been outworked by our team at the Christian Family Centre on the anvil of nearly 40 years of practical experience. In all these years, we have never had a major division, rarely taken a vote on big issues; and have only had to ask one Elder out of the 26 who have served, or are still serving with us, to step aside; and this was with the unanimous endorsement of the entire Eldership Board.

2.2 A *clearly defined division of responsibilities and duties* should be in place to ensure that *power is never absolute*; and that all who are involved in church government should operate within a *highly responsible and fully accountable* framework.

2.3 The best examples of how this operates in government is **firstly** the Westminster Model of Responsible Government. The Leader (The Prime Minister) is fully responsible and accountable to his/her Parliamentary Party; the Parliamentary Party is fully responsible and accountable to the Parliament; and the Parliament is fully responsible and accountable to the people.

The **second** great model is the United States Federal Governmental System where power is widely diffused at National level between the President, Congress and Supreme Court; and at Regional level by State, County, City and Town government systems. Australia's government system is a mixture of both the British Westminster and the American Federal models. The British and American Government structure, have evolved over hundreds of years and are the safest in regards to the *avoidance of the accumulation of too much power in the hands of one person or one group of people*. They are also founded on Christian pre-suppositions and Christians have had a huge role in their creation and gradual modification over the centuries.

Nation States that are overseen by totally responsible and fully accountable government systems produce *liberal democratic societies* that are *relatively free*, *live in peace*, have an *impartial non-politicised judiciary and police force*; and ensure that the *majority respects and protects the rights of all minorities within the rule of law*. How blessed we are to live in a freedom-loving and socially-cohesive country like Australia.

I think these secular governmental models exemplify the *Plurality of Leaders concept* of the New Testament church as it relates to Ministry and Government. There are lessons we can learn from our secular governmental processes and procedures in matters where the New Testament is silent; as long as these do not contravene clearly-defined and widely-accepted Biblical principles and truths.

3. LEAD MINISTERS MUST REALLY LEAD THEIR ELDERSHIP BOARDS AND THEIR CHURCHES

3.1 The Lead Minister

Leaders should be able to grow as big as God has called and gifted them to become. Those whom the risen Christ calls into leadership of his church (Ephesians 4:11-12) must be allowed to **flow** and **flourish** and be as **fruitful** as possible for God's glory.

They should be fully released to outwork at least the following four key tasks

- to 'cast the long-term strategic vision of the Church'
- to 'set the short-term spiritual directions and goals for the Church'
- to 'personify the core values and the ministry style of the Church'
- to 'be the main teacher/preacher of the Word.'

'THE ROLE OF THE LEAD PASTOR'

"Consistent with the New Testament concept of spiritual gifts, the Lead pastor, like any member of the body, is uniquely gifted and should seek to minister primarily within his gift area.

In addition to his pastoring role as an elder, the Lead pastor is primarily responsible to be a teacher of the Word of God and to provide strategic leadership and vision to the body. His goal is to help mature believers through insightful and accurate presentations of biblical truth, equipping them to be the true "ministers" in the body. He must strive to teach and lead by word and example, and he must stress both the understanding and the application of God's truth.

The Lead pastor should not be responsible to consistently minister in areas unrelated to his primary function and giftedness. To burden him with other roles (administration, counselling, visitation, etc.) is to rob him of planning time, study time, and devotion to the Word. This can lead to watered down, inaccurate teaching or ineffective leadership, both of which in turn weaken the body. As shepherds of the church, the Elders are responsible to appoint other leaders with complementary gifts to undertake areas and aspects of the ministry that cannot be filled by the Lead pastor.

Teaching within the body should not be limited to the Lead pastor.

The New Testament emphasises the need for teaching Elders and/or the utilisation of other members who are gifted in this area, thereby providing a variety of input and role models.” (6.)

It is imperative that all spiritual leaders (and particularly Lead Ministers and their Eldership Boards) be **constant learners**. This involves really learning the lessons that come from experience; and even more importantly, learning the lessons that come from **other people's experiences**.

This is why ‘Great Books’ and ‘Timely In-Service Seminars’ and ‘Leadership Courses’ with a **practical orientation** are priceless.

All Lead Ministers and Elders need to be personally growing in their leadership capacity and skills by inculcating **new learning** from excellent Leaders/Authors. It’s also good practice for Eldership and Ministry Staff to work through some key books that will really be helpful in their important team roles.

Some recommended authors and their book titles:

- *Group Dynamics* by Donelson R. Forsyth
(Brooks / Cole Publishing Company 1990)
- *Leaders – The Strategies For Taking Charge*
by Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus (Harper & Rowe 1985)
- *On Becoming A Leader*
by Warren Bennis (Perseus Books 1994)
- *Organising Genius*
by Warren Bennis (Addison and Wesley Longman 1997)
- *How to win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie
(Angus & Robertson 1989)
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey
(The Business Library 1989)
- *First Things First* by Stephen Covey (Free Press January 17, 1996)
- *Principle Centered Leadership* by Stephen Covey (Franklin Covey 2012)
- *Built to Last* by James Collins & Jerry Porras (Random House 1998)
- *How the Mighty Fall* by James Collins (Random House 2009)
- *From Good to Great* by James Collins (William Collins 2001)
- *More Than Numbers* by Yonggi Cho (Bridge Publishing 1983)

- *The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren (Zondervan 1995)
- *Rediscovering Church* by Lynn & Bill Hybels (Zondervan 1993)
- *Your Church Has a Great Future* by Robert Schuller (Regal Books 1986)
- *Leadership by the Book*
by Ken Blanchard, Phil Hodges & Bill Hybels (Waterbrook Press 1999)
- *Gung Ho!* By Ken Blanchard (Harper Collins 1998)
- *The Practical Executive and Leadership* by Dayle M. Smith
(NTC Business Books 1997)
- *How to change your Church without Killing it* by Gene Appel (Word 2000)
- *Natural Church Development* by Christian Schwarz
(C & P Publishing 1998)
- *Lincoln on Leadership* by Donald T. Phillips (Warner Books 1992)
- *Martin Luther King on Leadership* by Donald T. Phillips
(Warner Books 1999)
- *Theodore Roosevelt on Leadership* by James M. Strock
(Warner Books 2001)
- *Courageous Leadership* By Bill Hybels (Zondervan 2002)
- *Axiom* by Bill Hybels (Zondervan 2012)
- *Next Generation* by Andy Stanley (Multnomah Books January 2006)
- *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership* by Steven B. Sample
(Jossey-Bass April 2003)

We can so easily avoid coming to grief on so many issues if we are humble and teachable enough to be ***life-long learners***. There is nothing new under the sun, so it's imperative that all spiritual leaders be exposed to other leaders who are ***older, wiser and more experienced*** than them.

3.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

The team must allow the leader to fully express his/her leadership gifts and to become as big as God wants him/her to be.

Every team has to have a leader and therefore team members need to:

- sublimate their own personal leadership ambitions
- work under leaders and assist and support them in their leadership role
- cover the leaders' lacks and weaknesses and never expose their nakedness.

This does not preclude the team from openly sharing with the leader about his/her deficiencies, but it must be done in a constructive way that aims to help the Lead Minister become a more effective spiritual Leader.

- ... These evaluation meetings need to be pre-planned and at set times (ie, once per year) and should never be clandestine meetings of the Eldership Board without the knowledge and endorsement of the Lead Minister.
- ... All properly constituted meetings should be called and chaired by the Lead Minister or a chairman appointed from the Board by the Lead Minister and need to occur at a time and place when all members of the Eldership Team can generally be present. This responsibility can be delegated by the Lead Minister/Chairman or to any Board Member.

4. LEADERS MUST WORK RESPONSIBLY THROUGH THEIR TEAMS

4.1 The Lead Minister

Leaders must learn to express their leadership through a team and avoid being a “one person” show.

Therefore the leader must also allow the team members to grow as big as God wants them to grow in their personal ministry and leadership role within the church. Leaders should do all in their power to facilitate the full development of their team’s talents and gifts and coordinate their individual ministries into a purposeful and united team.

This is the balance to the previous section (Point 3) and should flow like a *good marriage* where a husband is to be a *loving and responsible* spiritual leader of his wife; and must never have a superiority mentality but a genuine *servant attitude, emulating Jesus* (Ephesians 5:21-33; Philippians 2:1-11).

- ... Good and effective leaders who are *spiritually and emotionally secure* will be *loving and giving* towards their team; and will be fully committed to *influencing, facilitating and coordinating their many aptitudes for God’s glory*.
- ... This is in marked contrast to *poor and ineffective leaders* who are *spiritually and emotionally insecure, immature and unloving*; and tend to only want to use their team to serve their own purpose. This is seen in their *dominating, over-controlling, and manipulative* leadership style. Any self-respecting team will react to this type of leader and unless there is real substantive change in the leader, there will be big trouble between the Leader and the team.

Plurality of Leadership is the way of our CRC Churches and every leader needs a team as much as every team needs a leader.

4.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

Teams only work well, however, when they sincerely and wholeheartedly submit to good leaders as defined in 3.2 and respect the God-given call upon the Lead Minister's life.

If a team member cannot operate like this, they need to step aside at the most appropriate time, to ensure that unity and love prevail and the Church is protected.

Submission does not mean that team members should have an unhealthy and a slavish unthinking devotion to a leader's every opinion and whim. Loyalty to a leader can operate within an environment where rigorous discussion, debate and even disagreements can take place before a decision. It is more than permissible for team members to agree to disagree agreeably from time to time.

5. LEADERS AND ELDERSHIP BOARDS MUST BE FULLY ACCOUNTABLE TO EACH OTHER AND TO OUR CRC DENOMINATIONAL FAMILY

5.1 The Lead Minister

The CRC reaffirms the ministerial credentials of all its ministers on a yearly basis, as we believe that the New Testament teaches that all ministry positions (Lead Minister, Associate Minister, Assistant Minister and Elder) can continue only on the basis of a **functioning and fruitful ministry**.

This is the only way a local Church can operate with real spiritual effectiveness and genuine integrity.

5.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

Teams should only over-rule the leader or terminate their leadership of the church if they wilfully violate clearly defined standards in the five crucial areas that our entire denominational family has agreed upon: -

1. Morality – Wilfully violating our accepted sexual purity standards
2. Money – Wilfully violating our accepted financial purity standards
3. Ministry – Wilfully violating our accepted relational purity standards
4. Doctrine – Wilfully violating our accepted Biblical purity standards
5. The law – Wilfully violating our accepted civic/legal purity standards

(Please refer to our CRC National Guidelines (ie) “Discipline and Restoration of Ministers Document.”) (7.)

Leo Harris, like many spiritual leaders who exemplify great personal integrity, exhorted his fellow Lead Ministers and students that were being trained for ministry to watch out for the 3 G's. ie ... the Girls, (or Guys) the Gold and the Glory. I believe it is the Glory or ‘Spiritual Pride’ that is the most dangerous and opens the door for the other two to entrap and destroy us. A leader’s fall can be traced to a gradual spiritual declension that is interlinked with complex webs of self-deception, long before they wilfully violate in any of the above five areas of entrapment. We must be willing to do all in our power to prevent this decline and this is where real accountability comes in.

Loving correction is in order for all who are in leadership positions (ie, Lead Ministers and Elders) if they stray from the *19 character qualities* that are outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 ... Please refer to sections 2 and 3 on pages 28-32. The level of personal scrutiny and accountability needs to be of the highest order for all who are given this level of responsibility and trust in Jesus’ church. The *Primary Qualities* we look for and the proposed *Character Check for Leaders* (refer Sections 3, 4 and 5, pages 29-35) need to be accepted as the minimum basis of Christian holiness and commitment for all church leaders. We have a solemn duty to watch our own lives carefully, and the lives of our fellow Elders, and to be courageous in confronting aspects of our lives that fail to measure up to this spiritual standard. This should be done on a person-to-person basis, and from time to time when we meet as a group to do a personal spiritual audit of our individual lives and our collective working as a team. It also needs to be said that accusations of inappropriate behaviour must be handled very wisely, lovingly and in a Biblically-mandated manner.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 “Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.”

Galatians 6:1-5, “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load.”

6. APPOINTMENT AND DISMISSAL POWERS OF ALL CHURCH OFFICERS

As this is an extremely sensitive matter and potentially the most destabilising and dangerous period in the life of a church, it must be handled with great care; and with some extra safeguards like outside consultation by people who are older, wiser and more experienced in Christian ministry. Please also refer to Section 11 on page 21. ‘Controversy and Conflict’.

6.1 The Lead Minister

Leaders should be able to recommend changes to the team over time, particularly if a team is already in place when they commence ministry in a Church. This needs to be outworked with great sensitivity and should normally take place at the yearly review period that usually precedes the Annual General Meeting of partnering members and supportive attendees.

This expectation must be clearly understood by both parties before a new Lead Minister is appointed. It is imperative that a prospective new leader and the existing Eldership Board really get to know each other and not rush the appointment process. They both need to appreciate *their particular histories, the unique culture of the new leader’s previous church; and the vision and values and present climate of the new church the new Lead Minister is joining.*

6.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

The concurrence by at least a 2/3 or 3/4 majority of the team needs to occur, which provides a check and a balance on the Lead Minister’s appointments prerogative. This will ensure that responsible and accountable decision making in this crucial area is always maintained.

An Eldership Board must consist of at least 3 people for a simple majority or a 2/3 majority decision to be possible. When an Eldership Board is enlarged it needs to be by two people at a time (ie. 5, 7, 9) as the odd number ensures

that a simple majority and 2/3 majority basis for decisions can be maintained. It is also recommended that small churches (ie. under 100 people) stick with a team of three. Churches that are between 100 – 300, a five person team. Churches of 300 plus that are growing can have a team of seven, but that should be the ceiling for most churches. Some really large churches of 500 plus have teams of up to eleven people but this is getting to the unwieldy stage. The ideal team, in a growing and healthy church that facilitates good decision making, is an Eldership Team of seven or nine members.

This provision ensures that the Elders/Oversight cannot be sacked en masse by a leader who develops a '**papal infallibility complex**'.

The Eldership Board should however be able to dismiss the Lead Minister if he/she has lost their confidence because of serious trouble as defined in point five (the five crucial areas. Pages 13 and 14).

This most serious of decisions should be made in consultation with our recognised State and National CRC Leadership Teams and be discussed fully with them, long before such drastic action is taken. This also prevents the Eldership Board from developing a '**college of cardinals infallibility complex**'.

It is absolutely imperative that all who exercise responsible authority (ie, Lead Ministers and Eldership Boards) should also be held accountable to guard against an abuse of that authority and power.

7. REVIEW OF ELDERS' FUNCTIONALITY

7.1 The Lead Minister

The Scriptures give no fixed term for Elders and therefore no specific fixed term of office should be recommended. Instead, it is recommended that every elder upon appointment should be asked for a *long term commitment*, *though this needs to be subject to an annual review by the Lead Minister, a fresh recommitment by each elder and a reaffirmation* by the church membership at the Annual General Meeting. It must be recognised that as a church grows, some elders who function well when say a congregation is around 70, may not have the capabilities to handle a church of 150 or 200 plus. It is important that new elders be brought onto the team at key strategic times to help facilitate the church's continual growth and development.

This annual review of the Elders functionality and continuing suitability, should be initiated by the Lead Minister as part of his/her leadership responsibility.

In the event of a team member whose vision, values, priorities and capacity is becoming incompatible with the rest of the team; and is affecting how the team operates; Lead Ministers and the other Elders need to be patient and wait for the time when changes to the composition of the team will be more readily accepted by the church (ie, at the yearly review period as the church heads up to its AGM).

If an elder refuses to step down from the team when the Lead Minister recommends this as part of his/her review, the matter must be decided upon by the Eldership Board.

The church must be fully aware of this process of *continual assessment* of all ministry roles and church officers, so that change of personnel is not viewed negatively but as a normal aspect of church life. Non-functioning and unfruitful leaders in all ministry areas of the church need to be wisely *challenged* and *lovingly re-deployed* in their church positions if they are not really fulfilling the spiritual duties required of them; and this also has to include both the Lead Minister and the Eldership Board.

7.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

They need to be educated that Eldership is not necessarily a life-time appointment!

We must be mature in this area, *learn to disagree agreeably* and ensure that we are governed by the law of love in this very sensitive matter of replacing Elders.

This matter of educating and disciplining Elders needs to be taken very seriously and it is recommended that *a training programme* be set up by the National and State Executives to acculturate all potential Elders about our CRC Values, Vision, Mission and Organisational Processes before they are appointed as Elders. This in-service training programme should be administered through our State Councils and our Recognised Regions either as *an individual correspondence course*, or through *set seminars* for groups of potential and existing Elders.

Proactive and preventative measures will save us a lot of time in the long term, as it will *pre-empt the many potentially divisive issues* that we are called upon to make judgements about. Most times the damage has already been done, and it is really difficult to retrieve a situation when disorder is the prevailing culture. James implores us to be wise and to close the door on the destructive works of satan, that flourish when selfish ambition and bitter envy take root in our interpersonal relationships, particularly amongst leadership.

James 3:13-18 “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”

Additionally, existing Elders should be encouraged by their Lead Minister to attend the special seminars run by their State Council.

8. FINANCE, PROPERTY AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

8.1 The Lead Minister

Though the Lead Minister may be the chief initiator (ideas, visions, etc) he/she should only have one vote in *finance, property and legal matters*, as the entire Board is corporately responsible (according to the law) for the legal, business, property, financial affairs and debts of the Church.

8.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

They along with the Lead Minister as a member of the Board of Elders should have absolute and total power in all financial decisions by at least a simple majority or even by a 2/3 majority.

It is also wise and proper if we believe in full accountability, that an appropriately qualified and very experienced *non-member* be appointed as the *financial auditor* of the Church. The auditor should be *duly empowered* by the Board to bring correction on any matter that is not fully aligned with the spirit and letter of the law, or with acceptable accounting practices.

This does not mean that we should limit the Lead Minister's faith and vision to think big or pursue innovative ideas and creative projects; but the full team have to *own these major finance and property decisions* with the utmost diligence.

It is also the responsibility of the team to keep fully abreast of *changes to the law* and how it relates to our local churches.

This encompasses Federal, State and Local government laws and regulations that can relate to such diverse areas as Occupational Health and Safety; Insurance/Professional Indemnity Concerns; Duty of Care matters as they relate to ministry to minors; Counselling ethics; Building Development Codes, etc.

9. SALARIES AND REMUNERATION MATTERS

9.1 The Lead Minister

Lead Ministers should not be involved in the process of setting their own salaries or of members of their family if they are on staff, though they can make suggestions regarding other staff members; (ie) bonuses, other encouragements, etc.

This ensures that no conflict of interest can be levelled at leaders, who with their Eldership Boards, determine the spending priorities of the church on a year to year basis.

9.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

They should have absolute and total power in this area and preferably by a 2/3 majority. If an elder has a family member as a salaried employee of the church, it is important for that elder to be excused from any discussions and decision about that family member's remuneration.

This responsibility can be delegated to a sub-committee of appropriate people as long as no salaried employee or a close family member of an employee be on the committee.

By keeping the church informed of this arrangement it greatly helps in *lifting the confidence* of the people in their spiritual leaders. This *totally transparent* and very clean approach, is also a very *positive witness* to the unchurched community. It really does demonstrate a standard that is higher than how the "world" generally operates. We aim to be not just 'within the law'; but to be 'beyond reproach or blameless' in this very sensitive matter.

10. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

10.1 The Lead Minister

The Lead Minister is often the initiator and proposer of constitutional changes but he/she has only one vote as the Chair of the Eldership Board.

10.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

The Board must be in total agreement and have the endorsement of the relevant State Executive of the CRC before presenting any proposed changes to the Church Membership. The proposal is then presented to the members for their endorsement and decision by a 2/3 or 3/4 majority.

The power to change the constitution of a local church should not reside totally in the hands of an Eldership Board, if they are the only members according to their constitutional arrangements. Any proposed changes to the constitution need to be endorsed and ratified by the State or National Executive of the CRC. This ensures that Lead Ministers and the Eldership Boards are fully transparent

and accountable to their denominational family in this very important area when the governing document of the church is to be changed.

These constitutional changes should be fully compliant with our State and National CRC organisational procedures and expectations as expressed in our State and National Constitutions, our Model Local Church Constitution and other relevant CRC Policies and Guidelines.

11. CONTROVERSY AND CONFLICT

11.1 The Lead Minister

Good and godly leaders will do all in their power to avoid a church split as it usually is a loss for all concerned (ie the Leader, the Board, the Congregation and our credibility before the community).

The Lead Minister and the Board should establish a ‘judicial body’ (Advisory Council) – comprising *recognised leaders* within our CRC denominational family – to resolve intractable issues. The members of a church have to be protected against serious matters remaining unresolved, which can lead to the church becoming divided. In these circumstances, both Lead Ministers and Eldership Boards should be subject to the nominated Advisory Council.

11.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

The Team is to be involved, along with the Lead Minister, in establishing or nominating this judicial body or Advisory Council.

This selected group of Nationally-credentialed CRC Ministers, or a State Executive or the National Executive should have a credible track record of experience, stability and wisdom. A previously-endorsed group of CRC ministers that have relationship with the church, rather than an elected Executive that changes every 2 to 4 years, is quite acceptable. This can safeguard against an Eldership objecting to their involvement because they did not vote an Executive in, or because they may not have full confidence in the capacity of some members of that Executive body handling matters of a large and complex church that requires a lot of experience.

The Christian Family Centre endorses its Advisory Council at its first official Eldership Board gathering each year and sends copies of its Board minutes to them so they are fully cognoscente of the churches affairs at all times.

12. COLLEGIATE LEADERSHIP AND FAMILY ENTANGLEMENTS

12.1 The Lead Minister

The premise behind all the principles and practical pointers that have been made so far in this paper, is that a local church should only ever have one person as its Lead Minister. This person has to *willingly accept the full responsibility* of what leadership entails and be prepared to be *fully accountable* in the exercise of their leadership role to a designated Board of Elders.

- The concept of a *team-Lead leadership*, or *dual-Lead leadership* or *co-Lead leadership* (by a husband and wife team) where all have equal authority and the same rights; rather than having one Lead leader as *the first among equals within a team context*, is extremely difficult to outwork and is mostly an unworkable model. The collegiate leadership model is *inherently unstable*, leads to periods of great *insecurity and disorder*; particularly over the important question of *succession* should something untoward happen to one of the Lead Ministers.
- The various arguments for this type of leadership model pale into insignificance, when one considers that there are no long-term viable examples from *Biblical and Secular history*. There are also no credible, tried and tested present day examples within the church world-wide, the governmental systems of all our world's Nation States; non-government organisations; businesses; trade unions; community groups, etc.
- When it comes to the church, Scripture unequivocally teaches that Jesus uniquely calls and graces individuals to exercise a particular ministry within His kingdom. Everyone in a local church is called and gifted to flow in a personally fulfilling and fruitful ministry role. The definite role of the overall Overseer, Leader or Lead Minister of a local church developed within a generation of the Acts church. It needs to be stated that the role of Lead Minister, Lead Elder or Presiding Elder as the first among equals of a ruling Eldership Team is not clearly *prescribed* in the New Testament. It certainly

is *implied*, when we examine the pre-eminent leadership role that James, Timothy and Titus played in the church at Jerusalem, Ephesus and the island of Crete. (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:8; 1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:5).

There also is a pretty *clear pattern* of leaders or ‘set apart individuals’ who take the lead, but work through Elders who assist and support them to lead the people of God. Whether they were **Patriarchs, Generals, Judges, Prophets, Kings or Apostles** they related closely to a team as responsible and accountable leaders.

(Exodus 4:29; Joshua 7:6; 1 Samuel 15:30; Psalm 107:32; 1 Kings 8:1-3; 1 Chronicles 11:3; Acts 2:14; Acts 20:17-33; Acts 21:18; Revelation 5:6).

The pattern and procedures of the synagogue in New Testament times, certainly impacted how the first Jewish Christians organised themselves into congregations. The NIV Study note in Mark 5:22 sheds light on Mark’s statement that Jairus was a local ‘synagogue ruler’. “*Synagogue Rulers. A ruler of the synagogue was a layman whose responsibilities were administrative and included such things as looking after the building and supervising the worship. Though there were exceptions (see Acts 13:15), most synagogues had only one ruler. Sometimes the title was honorary, with no administrative responsibilities assigned.*” (8.)

However, we also have to admit that a *plurality and equality* of leadership is also implied in Acts 10:17, 28; Philippians 1:1 and 1 Peter 5:1.

- A person who outworks the ministry role of the Lead Minister is not to be viewed as a superior or a more spiritual person than all the many ministry roles in the life of a church. However, we cannot minimise that Jesus raises up people with the ‘gift of leadership’ (Romans 12:8), and surely people with this gift are needed for the quite unique local church role of Lead Minister. I think Paul has this particular role in mind in Ephesians 4:11-16 when he says that it is the risen exalted Christ who gives “*some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.*” (Ephesians 4:11); and that their job description involves them being the equipping coaches “*to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*” (Ephesians 4:12.)

- In arguing the case for one clearly defined leader of each local church, it does not preclude the Lead Minister's spouse, children, or other family members also being called and gifted to minister within the same local church. It is just that they, like all others, cannot have the ***same authority and say*** as the Lead Minister who is to be fully accountable to the Eldership Board of the church. A spouse, or family member, or personal friend, can *influence*, like any member or leader in the church; but the *full responsibility rests upon the designated Lead Minister*, who has to give a *full account of his or her leadership to the recognised team*.

12.2 The Team (Board, Eldership, Oversight)

Though I concede that there are some examples of dual leadership and co-equal team leadership that can work for a period of time, it rarely lasts beyond an experimental period. In fact, when there is a change of personnel, it usually comes to an end. This is because the *unique personal and close relationship* of the duo, or the team in the initial set-up of a church, government, school, business, etc. simply *cannot be replicated*.

The one area that undermines the fully responsible and accountable model of leadership and good governance, is when one's spouse, children, other family members *are on the Eldership Board*. This should be avoided for the following reasons.

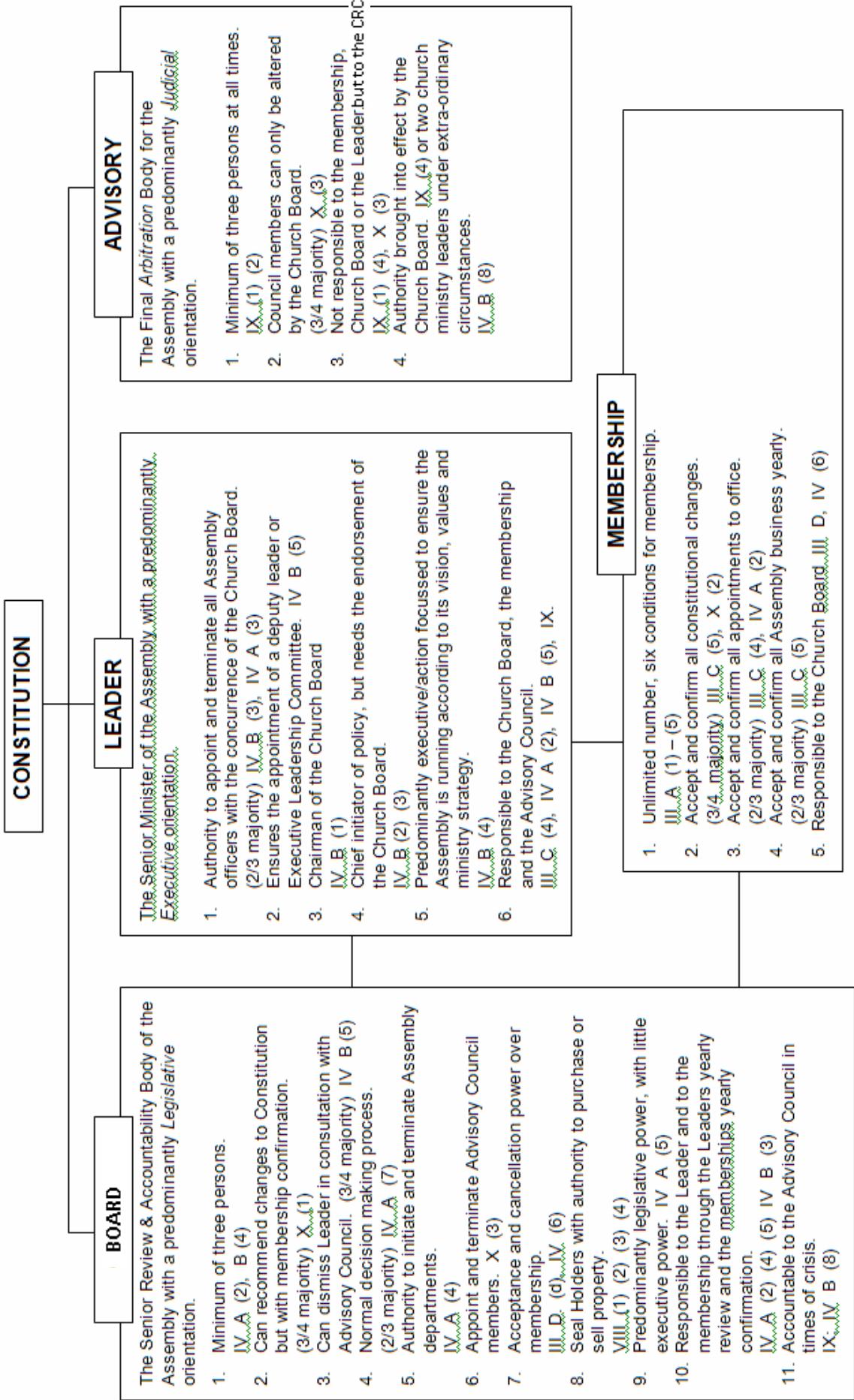
- It is difficult for a leader to be *totally free to lead* within the bounds of accountability to the team, if his or her family members are on the Board.
- It is also very hard for a team to be *totally objective and impartial*, when it comes to the very serious and sensitive matter of bringing the leader to account on some issue, *if a family member is on the Board*.

- There is no conflict of interest if a spouse, child or other family member is fully involved in *some ministry role* within the church; but it becomes a most serious conflict of interest when they are also members of the accountability Board of the church.
- A spouse or family member can be recognised as an assistant Pastor, be on salaried staff, counsel, preach, teach, etc. They *should not be prejudiced* if God has called and gifted them to flow in a ministry role within the same church; even though there will be some *special adjustments* that will need to be in place if this occurs. However *to avoid messy family entanglements* and the *danger of nepotism*, the Board of Elders who are the ultimate human authority in the church *should not be connected* to the Leader's personal family.
- In the *start-up phase* of a church - when it is a designated outreach and under the authority and supervision of a mother church or a State Executive - it may be necessary, if there are no appropriate candidates, for a spouse or family member to be on the *interim leadership team*. If it is necessary for a family member to be on the initial team, the mother church or State Executive that mentor them, should take a *direct supervisory role* in the really sensitive matters like salaries, disputes, etc. This is not the ideal, and it should only occur in the rarest of circumstances; and the family member should step down from the interim leadership team as soon as an appropriately qualified person becomes available to serve on the team.
- An important sign that a new church is ready to be recognised as an *autonomous interdependent local church* within the CRC is when it has at least two other spiritually mature members who are suitable to join with the Lead Minister to become the initial Eldership Board.

- If a spouse or family member is on the Eldership Team for a longer period than the start up phase of a church, there must be enough *non-family members* on the Team to be able to out-vote and over-rule the Lead Minister and his/her family members. For full accountability to be preserved, family members must be excluded from Board discussions and decisions that have to do with remuneration matters, or if the Lead Minister is to be corrected, disciplined or dismissed from office.

To conclude the first half of this document I have included a flow chart from the Christian Family Centre as a good example of what we mean by a fully responsible and fully accountable government structure. (9.)

SEATON – CHRISTIAN FAMILY CENTRE CONSTITUTION
FLOW CHART OUTLINING THE AUTHORITY STRUCTURE, LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY BETWEEN
ALL THE RELEVANT DECISION MAKING BODIES OF THE CHURCH



PART TWO – RELATIONAL HEALTH

... THE ABSOLUTE PRIORITY AND NEED FOR RELATIONAL HEALTH BETWEEN LEAD MINISTERS AND THEIR CHURCH ELDERSHIP BOARDS

1. A GOOD AND VERY SOUND RELATIONSHIP MUST EXIST BEFORE THE LEAD MINISTER RECOMMENDS SOMEONE FOR APPOINTMENT.

If it is not there prior to their appointment, it will most likely disintegrate once they are appointed; and that spells big trouble for the Lead Minister and the church. They must be “well known to” and “keenly observed by” the Lead Minister over several years and never just several months.

2. NEVER COMPROMISE 1 TIM. 3:1-7 AND TITUS 1:6-9, WHERE PAUL TELLS US WHAT SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS POTENTIAL CANDIDATES SHOULD BE DISPLAYING BEFORE THEY ARE RECOGNISED AND APPOINTED AS ELDERS.

The only spiritual gifts/natural aptitudes/abilities/competencies that seem to get a mention are “apt to teach” and the “ability to govern / manage”; and all the rest have to do with sound Christian character traits. The most important personal life arenas mentioned that are readily observable involve our **family** and **work** life.

- ... Their marriage/family needs to be in good order
- ... They also need to have a good reputation in the world
- (ie) employment record & community/civic relationships

Potential Elders should be thoroughly tested by being placed in various ministry, leadership and administrative-related roles and positions prior to considering them for Eldership. The Lead Minister and existing Elders need to watch them very closely over several years as they outwork the various ministry tasks assigned to them. The Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to “test” potential leaders before appointing them to office. If this principle applies to a church position with less responsibility than that of Elders (ie Deacons), we must be doubly sure when it comes to the appointment of new elders. 1 Timothy 3:10 *“They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”* Paul reiterates this by reminding Timothy not to be *“hasty in the laying on of hands”*

(1 Timothy 5:22). The NIV study notes says that “Paul is speaking of the ordination of an elder, which should not be performed until the candidate has time to prove himself.”^(10.)

Their personal suitability as a potential elder also needs to be rigorously assessed by having them sit in as a *trainee elder* for at least a 12 month period. **Character** is of first importance but **competency** is also a significant factor, particularly if the Eldership Board need the skills of new members to enhance their functionality as a team. This trainee period will also determine whether the potential new elder will fit in to the team, or has the right **chemistry** and really appreciates and understands the **culture** of the church and its Eldership Board. During this time they need to have completed any CRC *in-service training* provided by the State for all aspiring new elders.

Lead Ministers who are pressured to appoint people who have attitudinal and behavioural problems, or who are not totally loyal are making a serious mistake. Such appointments are never satisfactory, and will harm the Lead Minister, the Board and the Church.

3. BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

- The NIV Study Bible lists down 24 specific qualifications that apply to Elders and Deacons.

Self-controlled	Elder	1 Ti. 3:2; Tit. 1:8
Hospitable	Elder	1 Ti. 3:2; Tit. 1:8
Able to teach	Elder	1 Ti. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1:9
Not violent but gentle	Elder	1 Ti. 3:3; Tit. 1:7
Not quarrelsome	Elder	1 Ti. 3:3
Not a lover of money	Elder	1 Tit. 3:3
Not a recent convert	Elder	1 Tit. 3:6
Has a good reputation with others	Elder	1 Ti. 3:7

Not overbearing	Elder	Tit. 1:7
Not quick-tempered	Elder	Tit. 1:7
Lover of what is good	Elder	Tit. 1:8
Upright, holy	Elder	Tit. 1:8
Disciplined	Elder	Tit. 1:8
Above reproach (Blameless)	Elder/Deacon	1 Ti. 3:2; Tit. 1:6; 1 Ti. 3:9
Husband of one wife	Elder/Deacon	1 Ti. 3:2; Tit. 1:6; 1 Ti. 3:12
Temperate	Elder/Deacon	1 Ti. 3:2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Ti. 3:8
Respectable	Elder/Deacon	1 Ti. 3:2; 1 Ti. 3:8
Not given to drunkenness	Elder/Deacon	1 Ti. 3:3; Tit. 1:7; 1 Ti. 3:8
Manages his own family well	Elder/deacon	1 Ti. 3:4; 1 Ti. 3:12
Sees that his children obey him	Elder/deacon	1 Ti. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6; 1 Ti. 3:12
Does not pursue dishonest gain	Elder/Deacon	Tit. 1:7; 1 Ti. 3:8
Holds to the truth	Elder/deacon	Tit. 1:9; 1 Ti. 3:9
Sincere	Deacon	1 Ti. 3:8
Tested	Deacon	1 Ti. 3:10 (11.)

- Willow Creek Community Church lists 19 qualifications (based only upon, 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) and they are stated in a clear and contemporary manner.

1. **Above reproach** – *Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.*
2. **Husband of one wife** – *Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.*
3. **Temperate** – *Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.*
4. **Prudent** – *Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgement, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.*
5. **Respectable** – *Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honourable behaviour.*
6. **Hospitable** – *Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.*

7. **Able to teach** – *Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.*
8. **Not addicted to wine** – *Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.*
9. **Not pugnacious or quick tempered** – *Elders must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations.*
10. **Uncontentious** – *Elders must not be given to quarrelling or selfish argumentation.*
11. **Free from the love of money** – *Elders must not be stingy, greedy, out for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things.*
12. **Manage own household** – *Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.*
13. **Not a new convert** – *Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality.*
14. **Good reputation with outsiders** – *Elders must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.*
15. **Not self-willed** – *Elders must not be stubborn, prone to force opinions on others, or abuse authority. They must be servants.*
16. **Loving what is good** – *Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.*
17. **Just** – *Elders must desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgements must be based on scriptural principles.*
18. **Devout** – *Elders must be devoted Christ followers seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own walk.*
19. **Holding fast the faithful Word** – *Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. (14.)*

4. SOME CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT VALUES AND ATTITUDES TO LOOK FOR:

1. Humble/Submissive – Towards God

- James 4:6, 10 “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”
- 1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

2. Teachable – Towards God’s Word

- *2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*
- *2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

3. Eagerly Desirous – Towards God’s Service

- *1 Timothy 3:1 “Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.”*
- *1 Corinthians 14:1 “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.”*

4. Loving Loyalty – Towards God’s Church

- *Proverbs 3:3-4 “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favour and a good name in the sight of God and man.”*
- *1 Peter 5:1-4 “To the Elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”*
- *Hebrews 13:17-18 “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honourably in every way.”*

5. Integrity – Towards God’s World

- *1 Timothy 3:7 "He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."*
- *1 Timothy 4:12 "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."*
- *Proverbs 11:3 "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity."*

6. Surrendered – Towards Jesus Christ and the cause of Jesus’ Kingdom

- *Matthew 6:9-10 "Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*
- *Matthew 6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*
- *Matthew 28:19, 20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*

5. CHARACTER CHECK FOR LEADERS

The following very incisive questions for leaders are a good character check for all aspiring spiritual leaders, and in particular those men and women who desire to be Lead Ministers and Elders.

The standard of holiness required for Lead Ministers and Elders has to be extremely high as they have to be top role models of **Love, Humility, Purity, Discipline** and **Integrity**.

LOVE

- In your recent encounters with strangers or people you know, have you been consistently kind and compassionate?
- Is there any person against whom you are harbouring bitterness, resentment or jealousy?
- Are there groups of people whom you find yourself stereotyping or discounting?
- Do you have a complaining spirit, especially when others do not meet your expectations?
- Do you carry hidden anger against anyone?

- Do you speak unkindly concerning people when they are not present?
- Have you recently extended yourself toward the poor, the imprisoned, the sick, or the elderly?
- Are you intentionally building at least one friendship with a non-churched person?
- Are you a genuinely joyful person to be around these days?
- Do you intentionally create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation for those who follow your leadership?
- Do you use people for the achievement of your mission?

HUMILITY

- Do you put on a pretence of being something you are not?
- Are your conversations often self-serving or self-promotional?
- Are you controlling, often insisting on having your own way?
- Do you have a stubborn, critical, or unteachable spirit?
- Can you receive constructive criticism, without becoming overly defensive?
- Are you overly concerned with your title, your image, and your status in the organisation?
- If you are ruthlessly honest, do you consider yourself to be better than most other people, especially those you lead?
- Are you concerned about receiving credit for your ideas, your contribution, and your leadership role?
- Are you quick to genuinely celebrate the success of others, even when they accomplish “more” than you?
- Have you intentionally been performing any secret acts of service in recent days?
- Are you in any setting where you are a follower instead of a leader?

PURITY AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

- Have you allowed anything to gain mastery over you – food, television, pleasure, alcohol, drugs, sports, the Internet, etc?
- Do you listen to unwholesome radio or music, watch unwholesome television or movies, or indulge in any pornography?
- Do you allow impure thoughts about sex to stay in your mind?

- Are you engaging in any flirtatious activity or feasting on escapist thoughts with anyone who is not your spouse?
- Are you getting enough rest and practising regular Sunday worship?
- Is your life marked by too much noise or busyness, and are you always in a hurry?
- Do you neglect or give little time to personal prayer and solitude?

INTEGRITY

- Have you recently lied, exaggerated, or embellished the truth?
- Have you followed through on your promises – is your word to others completely reliable?
- Do you do your work “with all your heart,” or is it easy for you to coast along on your gifts and reputation?
- Do you have a thankful heart toward God, frequently acknowledging His goodness and blessings?
- Are you honouring God with your finances, both in your personal life and in your leadership capacity?
- Is there any area of your life you are hiding from others to protect your image or position?
- Are you seeking to live the kind of life you urge (or teach) others to live?
- Are you opening up your life in an accountable way to at least one other person (besides your spouse) who will speak truth to you?
- Are you obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit as best you can discern them?
- Are you as fully devoted to God as you can be? (15)

6. SOME DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS TO LOOK FOR:

Key words: *Availability, Ability, Reliability, Responsibility, Accountability, Flexibility (or Adaptability) and Authority.*

Only available, **competent** people with appropriate **capabilities and competencies** who show top Christian **character** by being *reliable, responsible, accountable* and *flexible* in their personal and ministry lives, should be given *authority* in the church. Lead Ministers who give authority to unreliable, irresponsible, unaccountable and inflexible people, who may have great abilities,

but cannot pass the 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 prescriptive character test for an Elder, are making the biggest ministry mistake possible.

7. THE NEED TO PERSONALLY PASTOR THE ELDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Lead Ministers should:

- ... Be involved in the spiritual lives of their Elders and Elders' families.
- ... Always be available to help them in times of need.
- ... Not just be task-orientated or agenda-driven with them.
- ... Make Eldership Board meetings their small relational group as well.
(ie) pray over personal needs, have open sharing times and allow caring to take place for up to 30 minutes each time a meeting is held.
- ... Do not delegate this to anyone else. - it must be seen as the Lead Minister's responsibility to facilitate.

This does not mean that Lead Ministers and their Elders live in each other's pockets.

- ... Never "play favourites" as this will only create envy in some team members, as it is crucial that all team members are loved equally.

8. THE NEED TO BE "UP-FRONT" REGARDING THE EXPECTATIONS THAT LEAD MINISTERS HAVE FOR THEIR ELDERS

- ... How many *committee meetings* will there be each year (ie, weekly, fortnightly, monthly or bi-monthly) and what level of pre-committee work will be expected of them.
- ... How much *work is required* of them individually and as a team? Work out beforehand the *number of hours per week* and remember that they also have full-time jobs in most cases.
- ... What about weekly *Church attendance*? Does this involve 1, 2 or 3 services per week and what about *some other small group involvement*, etc?
- ... Provide a *role description* for the entire team and as appropriate, for individual team members as well.

9. THE ELDERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TOWARD THEIR LEAD MINISTER

9.1 Allow the Lead Minister to lead

- ... His/Her responsibilities are to:

- Lead and chair the Eldership Board and Ministry Staff meetings and be ex-officio on all church committees. Another Elder can chair the

meetings, but the Lead Minister must be free to lead under God's direction.

- Cast the strategic vision for the church.
 - Develop the ministry style of the church.
 - Set the spiritual direction and faith goals/targets over set periods of time (ie, 1 year – 3 years, etc.).
 - Ensure all ministries are aligned to the accepted Values and Vision of the Church.
 - Minister the Word and oversee the other main Public Teachers.
 - Ensure ministry development. (ie) Identifying, Investing in and Entrusting people for Ministry and Leadership roles in the church.
- ... There can only be one Lead leader of the church, therefore the Elders must sublimate their own ambition in this area and be prepared to work under the Lead Minister so as to enhance his/her leadership of the church.

Some Elders, however, are potential Lead Ministers in training; and they need help to know when it is time to move out and become a Lead Minister in their own right.

9.2 Free the Lead Minister to lead effectively

- ... Take as much off his/her shoulders that is not indispensable to their main roles. (ie) Pastoral, Counselling and Administration duties; but the elders must have his/her permission for this to work smoothly.
- ... Always be looking out for ways to release their time so they can concentrate energy on *spiritual leadership concerns, prayer, study and the ministry of the Word* (Acts 6).
- ... Be there when you are needed by them.

9.3 Provide care and support for the Lead Ministers and their families

- ... Appreciate the unique stresses on them of constant leadership and the relentless nature of weekly preaching/teaching.
- ... Relate lovingly to their spouse and children.
- ... Ensure that their financial and material needs are looked after.

Paul is very clear about how we should treat our leaders, particularly those who excel in leadership, preaching and teaching.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 *"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."*

Therefore, reasonable and equitable salary packages are the order of the day.

(Please refer to our “CRC Salary Guidelines”). (16.)

- ... Be considerate of other needs and associated expenses. eg. conferences, study trips, books and magazines.
- ... Don't be shocked by the humanity of the Lead Minister and his/her family and always keep confidences particularly during the hard times.

IN CONCLUSION

This Guideline is prefaced and grounded upon my strongly-held conviction that the CRC needs to become far more ‘**Interdependent**’ at both a ministerial level and also at the local church level. This was what God placed in the heart of our founder. Leo Harris writes “*Finally, God has given us the concept of revival in and through local churches. We have seen that the New Testament pattern for the Christian church is the establishment of local self-governing churches under a Scripturally-qualified oversight. But the New Testament envisages these local Christian churches, while being autonomous, as functioning in the unity and love of the Spirit of God.* In other words, our concept is not of **independent** local churches, but of self-governing, **inter-dependent** local churches, and there is a vast difference between the two. We do not glory in our independence, but we strive to live up to the claims of inter-dependence, for we are all members of one body in Christ.” (17.)

We reject the extremes of both the ‘**Independent**’ and the ‘**Dependent**’ Model’s and by the grace of God we are outworking the ‘Autonomous Interdependent Model’ as the closest to the New Testament pattern.

I believe that pursuing an ‘**Autonomous Interdependent Model**’ is not only Biblical but in the best interests of our movement and its future viability. It will naturally result in a much stronger cohesiveness amongst us as a family of Ministers and Churches and bring greater glory to Jesus.

Yours sincerely

Pastor Bill Vasilakis
National Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. Church Leaders Handbook

By Peter Braoudakis (Willow Creek Association 1997)

Quote (1) – page 6; Quote (3) – page 7; Quote (6) – page 9-10;

Quote 14 – pages 31-32

2. NIV Study Bible (Zondervan 1985)

Quote (2) – page 6; Quote (8) – page 23; Quote (10) – page 29; Quote (11) –

pages 29-30

3. Vision – The Concept and Challenge of the CRC Operation Outreach – The New Testament Blueprint

Note (4) – page 7; - Note (17) – page 40

4. Christianity 101

By Dr Gilbert Bilezikian (Zondervan 1993)

Quote (5) – page 7; and Appendix 1

5. CRC Churches International Ministers Manual

Note (7) – page 13; - Note (16) – page 39

6. Christian Family Centre Constitution

Quote (9) – page 26-27

7. Leadership Development Manual

(Willow Creek Association 2001)

Quote (15) – pages 34-36

8. Editorial Comments

By Barry Chant and Ian Miller

CHRISTIANITY 101

by Dr Gilbert Bilezikian (Zondervan 1993)

Chapter 7 – The Doctrine of the Church – Pages 194 – 202

THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

Although God has entrusted the church with many responsibilities to fulfil on this earth, we must remember that above all else, the church exists for God's sake. God made the church primarily because he loves it. It is his special creation within all of creation. God's love for the church is reason enough for it to be. A good man takes a bride because he loves her and wants to serve her and enhance her life. Whatever she may do in service to him is the result of their union rather than the purpose for it. In a similar manner, Christ loved the church as his bride and gave himself up for her to make her beautiful and exalted (Eph. 5:25-27). In return for Christ's servant love, the church submits herself to him in all things as his servant (v.24). In this section, we will survey some aspects of the servant *ministry* of the church as it unites believers in community, in worship, and in outreach.

1. *Oneness in Community*

In the previous section we explored the church as God's community of oneness. He delights in oneness among humans and desires to be part of it. When two or three are gathered in Christ's name, he promises to be present in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). He lives among them by his Spirit (Eph. 2:22). However, such oneness does not just happen. It is generated and nurtured by the sharing of authentic faith, with the pursuit of clearly defined objectives, by conformity to patterns of behaviour consistent with the teaching of Scripture, and by methods of communal organisation that encourage participation. Each of these will now be considered in sequence.

a. A shared faith

The apostle Paul testifies that the church has "one faith" (Eph. 4:5) and is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (2:20). It is important to define what this foundation consists of. The Christian faith is founded on Scripture. But the Bible is a huge book, and people often understand its contents differently. What some stress as the foremost parts of the Bible

other Christians ignore completely, and some draw ideas from Bible texts that others interpret in an opposite manner. Therefore every church needs to formulate clearly its understanding of the Christian faith in a document commonly called a “creed,” a “statement of faith,” or a “confession of faith.”

Obviously, such a document cannot be exhaustive. It cannot be made to say all that could be said. It should normally cover the main areas of the Christian faith, such as those suggested by the outline of this book: Revelation, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, human beings, redemption, the church, and the endtimes. But in doing so, two dangers must be avoided. One is to draw a statement so vague that it requires virtually no faith commitment to subscribe to it. Some groups adopt such broad formulations that Christians, Moslems, and Hindus can all endorse them. In this case the church risks losing its Christian distinctiveness.

The opposite pitfall is to draw a statement of faith so detailed on minor points of doctrine that it becomes divisive. In this case, a church tends to become cultic and separatist. The long history of church tradition supplies us with a number of great faith documents, such as the Apostles’ Creed (so called!), the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds, and certain denominational confessions, that can serve as models for the formulation of balanced statements that emphasise the essential tenets of the faith with integrity and fairness. Such a statement can provide guidance for the preaching and teaching ministries of the local church. At the same time, it provides a common basis for the commitment of new believers to church membership.

b. A shared purpose

A clear statement of faith also enables a congregation to draw from it a definition of its mission. A church that does not know precisely what it is supposed to accomplish will either do nothing or will spread itself too thin by trying to do everything. Each congregation needs to draw a clear and concise strategy statement for what it believes God calls it to accomplish within the particular location where it is planted. Since needs and opportunities vary from place to place, the approaches must be defined accordingly.

Obviously, such a statement of purpose should include the elements of communal life, shared worship, and corporate outreach as vital areas of a church's life. But such goals will not likely be attained if it does not adopt specific methods for attaining them. Therefore, the statement of purpose should also suggest carefully designed strategies to work out those objectives. A church takes too great a risk in leaving the fulfilment of its mission to the happenstance of improvisation. The challenges facing churches in modern society require them to follow carefully considered plans so that they can focus their efforts on what needs to be accomplished without being distracted by the many worthy causes that clamor for their involvement when those are not central to their purpose. As Jesus commissioned the disciples for a short-term outreach effort, he told them to be as wise as serpents within their generation (Matt. 10:16). The command still applies today. Such strategising does not preclude reliance on the Holy Spirit; rather, wise planning enhances and multiplies the effectiveness of the Spirit.

c. A shared lifestyle

One of the most consistent themes of Scripture is that in order to be authentic, faith in God is to be lived out in this world. Faith has implications for how we think, talk, act, and relate to others. Without faith, the values that determine behaviour are borrowed from a world ignorant of divine guidance. With the commitment of faith comes commitment to a new life informed by God's Word. The Bible rejects some behaviours as being incompatible with God's will, and it requires in their place other forms of conduct derived from God's will. In the chapter on salvation, this change from one lifestyle to another was defined as the result of the restoration of God's image in human life through the process of sanctification (see pages 165-66).

In order to provide clear guidance in those areas to its people, it is appropriate for a church to draw up a statement of responsibilities outlining its expectations for its members as well as the means of enforcement. The absence of such a statement sends the message that anything goes. When this happens, the line between the church and society becomes blurred, and the church fails to impact society because it is not modelling a Christian lifestyle. On the other hand, a statement of conduct may be so restrictive that it appears cultic and controlling. Some churches seem to be so intent on

protecting their members from worldly influences that, through detailed sets of rules and regulations, they segregate them from society so much that they have no channels left for ministry to the world.

For this reason, it is advisable for churches to refrain from placing legalistic prohibitions and expectations on their members that go beyond the clear teaching of Scripture. For instance, the Scriptures clearly forbid drunkenness but permit the drinking of wine for a variety of reasons (John 2:1-11; Eph. 5:18; 1 Tim. 5:23). Churches that require total abstinence as a condition for membership should realise that Jesus himself would be rejected as a member, since he once changed 120 gallons of water into wine for people who had already drunk enough to be unable to discern its high quality. In view of the enormous social problems caused by alcoholic addiction in contemporary society, churches may legitimately advise abstinence rather than require it as if it were a biblical command. More important, however, is that churches exercise strict discipline in areas clearly defined by Scripture. Note that the same biblical text that prohibits drunkenness also requires the excommunication of people who love money (the “greedy”) and who badmouth other people (the “revilers”; see 1 Cor. 5:11-13).

This raises the issue of church discipline. Having a statement of conduct is useless if it cannot be enforced. The New Testament places on the congregation the responsibility to watch over its members both to correct offending members and to protect the body in case of misbehaviour. It ordains a graded approach of confrontation so that opportunity for repentance is offered at every stage of the process (Matt. 18:15-18). Should the process lead to excommunication, its purpose is not the permanent exclusion of the offenders, but their eventual restoration to the body (2 Thess. 3:14-15). Thus, through this watchcare Christians can maintain good conduct in the world so that unbelievers may see how honourably they live and may themselves be brought to God (1 Pet. 2:10).

d. A shared authority

As just noted, concern for the purity of the church and for the welfare of its members requires the exercise of oversight. Some may stray away from the faith or err in their behaviour and, as a result, may need to be rebuked or even disciplined. A progressive and dynamic church ministry requires decisions to be made in regard to policies, personnel, and planning. So the question arises as to who should exercise leadership in those areas.

Historically, churches have come up with three basic forms of governance.

One model places the authority for the conduct of the affairs of the church community in one person who decides from the top down what is good for the group. In this case, the leader stands at the uppermost point of a pyramid of authority and sees to it that his or her decisions are carried out at every level of execution down the chain of command. This form of administration is comparable to the hierarchic organisation of the military or of management in traditionally structured corporations.

The model at the opposite end of the spectrum puts the responsibility for making decisions in the hands of the congregational as a whole. In this case, the “leaders” of the group are appointed by it and have only an advisory function. They bring the business of the church to the community, and the group as a whole makes the decisions that affect its life and ministry.

A third model looks like a compromise between the two described above. It might be pictured as a sawed-off pyramid. The congregation appoints a group of representative leaders who act on its behalf while remaining accountable to it. The leadership is represented by the top of the truncated pyramid. It forms a part of the congregation it serves, and the plurality of leadership provides checks and balances that the one-man leadership model does not have. This group of leaders – who may be called elders, deacons, the session, or the vestry, depending on the church’s denomination – has the authority to manage the affairs of the church. But because they are elected to their position of responsibility by the people of the church, they remain answerable to the community for the administration of its affairs.

The diversity of views on this subject may cause us to wonder what exactly is the teaching of the New Testament on church governance. In order to find out, we must first consider the teaching of Jesus on this subject. He anticipated the establishment of the community of faith and gave instructions for its functioning.

Jesus absolutely forbade one individual to hold authority over others in Christian communities. The disciples were upset at the fact that he was not structuring their own group with one of them in charge and the others under him. That was the only model of group organisation they knew. So, behind his back, they apparently decided to elect their own leader as the one "greatest" among them (Mark 9:33-35). Upon learning this, Jesus rebuked them and told them that anyone who wants to be the top man in a Christian community should instead make himself servant to all. A servant does not exercise authority over others but places himself or herself under the authority of the group.

This one strong lesson should have been enough to put the point across to the disciples. But they were so used to the principle of people being under the authority of strong individual leaders that they could not grasp the radical nature of Jesus' teaching. Thus, two of them approached Jesus privately and asked him to make them number one and number two in his community (Mark 10:35-45). They had completely missed the point. Again, Jesus explained to the two disciples that in order to become leaders according to his definition of leadership, they had to share in his own ministry of self-sacrifice, humiliation, and suffering instead of seeking positions of authority.

On hearing this, the other ten disciples became angry at James and John for their attempt to supplant them. Once more, Jesus gathered the disciples and gave them a strong teaching on how to structure Christian communities. He gave them the illustration of the imperial political system under which they were all living. They were ruled by one person (the Roman emperor), who exercised authority all the way down the pyramid of society. Jesus had no objection to that form of government for non-Christian communities. He said it was acceptable for the world to structure its communities in this manner but

not for Christians. The only person who rules Christian communities is the Lord himself (Matt. 23:8-11). Under him, we are all equals.

Jesus emphatically rejected the top-down authority model by declaring, “It shall not be so among you” (Mark 10:43 RSV). He also added that the very people who desire to run the show should instead become servants and slaves to the community. Single leaders tell other people what to do; servants and slaves ask others what they can do for them. The servant attitude is the antidote Jesus prescribed for the poison of single-person leadership structures. And to emphasise this point, Jesus cited as his reason the precedent he had himself set by giving up his position of supreme authority to become a servant among humans (Mark 10:45). With this teaching, Jesus grasped in his mighty hands the worldly concept of community as a pyramid of power and turned it upside down on its head. For true oneness to happen in Christian communities, those who aspire to lead from the top must instead serve at the bottom. Thus the strength of the strong can balance and support the efforts of the weak.

Jesus knew that without supervision and therefore without the exercise of authority the work of the church cannot go on. Decisions must be made and responsibilities must be carried out. The call to servanthood does not absolve the church from making decisions and seeing to it that they are put into effect. However, in Christian communities the slogan “Somebody’s got to be in charge”, does not apply because the whole body is mobilised by the Spirit to be in charge. Out in the world, one person may make the decisions for the whole group. But in the church, it is the group that decides for itself. In Christian communities, authority is not vested in one dominant individual but in the body as a whole or in a representative plurality of leaders.

Jesus illustrated this principle with one of the most critical decisions a group may be called to make: that of ruling on who may or may not be part of the community (Matt. 18:15-20). In the community of oneness, such matters ultimately come to the body, not just to one individual (v.17). And the decisions made by the group are binding because they have an eternal relevance (v.18) since Christ is present in the group, providing guidance to it (v.20). When Jesus placed the base of authority in the congregation rather

than in once person, he was not being anti-authority. In fact, he was giving greater strength to the authority principle since decisions are more binding when they are made by many people than when they issue from a single individual. Jesus denied any one person the right to control the community, for that power belongs to him alone and he shares it only with the body of which he is the only Lord.

As a result of this teaching by the Lord, there is no church mentioned or described in the New Testament that was governed by a single leader, and there is no discussion of a practice called ordination whereby selected persons are designated as “ministers” or “priests” – except for the formal recognition of spiritual gifts among believers (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6). The New Testament recognises all believers as “ministers” and “priests” (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-7; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6). Because these churches were at different stages of development, because they had attained different levels of maturity, because they were located in different social environments, and because they all had different corporate personalities, their particular methods of self-governance were not the same. But in every case, leadership was a shared responsibility.

When the apostle Paul dealt with the congregations of Corinth, Galatia, and Colosse, he did not appeal to a leader or even to a group of leaders to resolve their problems. He set his case before the whole church and asked for congregational resolutions. Some churches had designated groups of representative members, called elders (or bishops) and deacons, to provide leadership to the congregation on its own behalf. This was true for the church in Ephesus (1 Tim. 3) and in Philippi (Phil. 1:1). But even in these cases, a careful study of the required qualifications for such leaders and of the very scant information provided in Scripture about their job descriptions indicates that the mode of their administration was designed after the pattern of the sawed-off pyramid. Moreover, the New Testament shows that this pattern of church governance is best illustrated by turning the shortened pyramid upside-down on its small base, with the leaders caring for the people from the bottom as their servants, not lording it over them but being examples to the flock and empowering them for ministry (1 Pet. 5:2-3).

In the church, as in most human organisations, there is a need for strong leaders who are farsighted, proactive, and intentional in promoting the purposes of the group. But their leadership gifts should never be misused as a pretext for the exercise of personal dominance (1 Pet. 5:3). The scriptural mandate for leaders is to use their gifts to enable, empower, and facilitate the development of leadership skills among other members of the group, within each one's area of competence. Moreover, the Scripture requires that individual leadership be exercised within the context of a leadership team (plurality of elders) so that decisions will be made consensually on the basis of broad participation. The members of a church's leadership team (whether called elders, deacons, session, or vestry) are the real pastors of the church. Together they are accountable to keep watch over the souls of their charges (Heb. 13:17 NRSV). In this perspective, the appointive pastor or "Lead" pastor should act as one of the regular members of the leadership team and, preferably, not as its chairperson. Christ alone is the Chief Shepherd of the church (1 Pet. 5:4).

In our day, much emphasis is given to church structure, with a tendency to make it rigidly uniform for different churches on the basis of the one pattern derived from 1 Timothy 3. However, we must remember that this pattern reflected the governance mode of only one church in New Testament times and that other churches had other forms of governance. Accordingly, each church should decide under the Spirit's guidance what form of governance will work best for it, rather than model itself after some other church. In fact, the changing needs of any church in process of development may call for the consideration of different forms of governance at each significant stage of its growth. Both the availability of leadership and the size and maturity of the congregation will affect the choice of structure. Contemporary churches must be as adaptable and as flexible in this regard as New Testament churches were under the guidance of the Spirit during the first century. We must realise that institutionalised misreadings of Scripture that define Christian community as hierarchy instead of oneness eventually result in the disablement of community.

One of the obvious advantages of churches with consensual and adaptable forms of governance is the openness they offer for the use of the spiritual

gifts invested by God in each member of the congregation. Within rigid structures, the leaders at the top monopolise access to ministry. But where the Spirit of the Lord is allowed to be active, there we find freedom and opportunity (2 Cor. 3:17). Each individual may become involved in service on the basis of his or her spiritual gift(s), knowing that every gift is important for the work of the kingdom. Some gifts we regard as being authority-intensive, such as that of apostles (church-planting pioneers), prophets (preachers), evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Scripture describes those very gifts as service ministries provided by God to facilitate the work of the congregation and to enable it to carry on the ministry of the church (Eph. 4:11-12). The congregation does not exist to enable the clergy to do ministry. The New Testament teaches precisely the opposite; the clergy exist in order to enable the congregation to do ministry (v.12). According to the inverted-truncated pyramid model, they are at the base of the structure empowering the congregation above it to do the church's work of ministry by facilitating the use of all the spiritual gifts made available by God to the congregation. The authority of ministry belongs to all of God's people, not to the spiritual elite above them.

Privacy Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to help you understand the Privacy Act and what your church will need to do to ensure that it complies with this Act of Parliament.

1. Introduction

Our Churches, Various ministries and CRC State and National bodies all collect personal information from people for a variety of reasons.

It is significant to recognise that privacy is very important to most people.

It is an act of trust by an individual to provide personal information. In response, we need to take the process of upholding an individual's privacy very seriously.

1.1 The Privacy Act

In December 2000, the Federal Parliament passed the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000. This legislation amended the Privacy Act 1988, which had mainly covered public sector agencies. However, the Privacy Act now applies to most private sector organisations, denominations and churches whose income is over \$3 million/year.

The Amendment Act sets out how we should collect, use, keep, secure and disclose personal information. It also gives individuals the right to know what information an organisation holds about him or her and the right to correct it if it is wrong.

The Act has ten National Privacy Principles (NPPs) which all have direct implications for the Church.

Further information about the Act and these principles is located at the Australian Privacy Commissioner's website at www.privacy.gov.au.

1.2 About these guidelines

This guideline is designed to help you understand the Privacy Act and what your church will need to do to ensure that it complies with this Act of Parliament.

In Section 3 you will see a copy of the CRC Churches International Privacy Policy. At this point in time neither the CRC Churches Movement, nor our churches are compulsorily required to abide by the Privacy Legislation. However, the CRC National Executive has decided that as a general principle our movement and churches should embrace the intent of the Privacy Act and voluntarily accept the requirements of the Act. To this end this document has been compiled and is recommended to our churches as a procedural and policy guideline. This document therefore applies to all of the major ministries (e.g. Youth, Missions etc) and to our Churches, State and National bodies.

The following pages (Section 4) introduce the National Privacy Principle's aim to highlight the key points for implementation of each principle.

At the back of the Guideline you will find a full copy of the National Privacy Principles (Refer Appendix 2)

1.3 The Privacy Contact Person's role

The key tasks of the Privacy Contact Person are:

- a. Introduce the Privacy Act and its implications to your church
- b. Conduct an audit of how your church collects, collates, and uses personal information and identify areas that may need attention. (Refer Section 5)
- c. Keep a Privacy Register (Refer Section 6)
- d. Ensure all future collection of information adheres with the Privacy Act. (Refer Section 7)
- e. Handle any enquiries or complaints. (Refer Section 8)
- f. The Privacy Contact Person does not need to personally view the information, simply to oversee the process.

2. What the church should do

- Appoint a Privacy Contact Person.
- Privacy Contact Person and Pastor read the Privacy Kit and begin to familiarise themselves with the Act. Put the Privacy Act on the agenda of your next Church Eldership Meeting.
- Inform your church members about the Act by distributing the Privacy Information Brochures
- Complete an Audit Information Sheet for each activity that your congregation does which involves the collection of personal information. Store the audit information sheets in a register with other privacy details.
- Put together an action plan detailing those tasks that your audit has identified that require further attention. This will ensure your congregation complies with the Privacy Principles and the CRC Churches Privacy Policy. Detail in your register.
- Train members of your congregation who collect, use, store or destroy personal information.

3. Privacy Guidelines – CRC Churches International

The Church conducts religious, outreach and community activities including religious services, fellowship, weddings, funerals, baptisms, counselling and caring for members of the community.

As from September 2003, the CRC Churches International National Executive has agreed we, as a movement should adhere to the Privacy Act (2000), and the National Privacy Principles that are contained in the Act, listed below:

- Collection
- Use and disclosure

- Data quality
- Data security
- Openness
- Access and correction
- Identifiers
- Anonymity
- Trans-border data flows
- Sensitive Information

Further information on the principles is contained within the legislation, or from the Privacy Commissioner's Office.

The diverse range of activities of our Church also gives rise to numerous uses of personal information within the Church.

Personal information may be collected in a variety of ways including registration or enrolment forms, or in personal notes.

The information collected may include names, addresses, email addresses, telephone and fax numbers, medical details, family details (including spouses, children, guardians & parents' details), credit card and account numbers, and any notes taken for counselling purposes.

The Church only collects personal information which is necessary for its activities, and in particular only collects sensitive information where it is consented to by the individual, or their parent or guardian. Sensitive information is only shared where the Church has a belief that its use/disclosure is necessary to prevent threats to health, life or safety to any individual.

Personal information is not shared without the prior consent of the individual. It is not distributed to any organisation, which is not associated with CRC Churches International.

All personal information is stored in secured cupboards, and where possible in secured premises. All personal data in an electronic form is stored in secured facilities.

All paper containing personal data is disposed of either by secured paper destruction, shredding or incineration. All disks and other electronic storage devices containing personal data are destroyed when no longer in use.

Individuals may access data, which is held by the Church regarding them, by notifying the Church in writing of their request. The Church will acknowledge the request within 14 working days and arrange a time for viewing the data. Information which is out of date or incorrect will be updated upon written request, or the applicant will be notified of the reason why the information will not be updated.

The Church may send out newsletters and other information including information from different associated bodies of the Church from time to time. If an individual does not want to receive any of this type of information, they should notify their relevant congregation, ministry or State or National body in writing of their desire not to receive any further information.

4. An overview of the Privacy Principles

In December 2000, the Federal Parliament passed the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000.

This legislation amended the Privacy Act 1988. The Amendment Act sets out how we should collect, use, keep, secure and disclose personal information. It also gives individuals the right to know what information an organisation holds about him or her and the right to correct it if it is wrong. The Act has ten National Privacy Principles (NPPs) under the following headings:

1. Collection

Collection of personal information must be fair, lawful and not intrusive. A person must be told the church's name; the purpose of collection; and how to get access to their personal information; and what happens if the person chooses not to give the information.

2. Use and disclosure

A Church should only use or disclose information for the purpose it was collected (primary purpose) unless the person has consented, or the secondary purpose is related to the primary purpose and a person would reasonably expect such use or disclosure.

3. Data quality

The Church will take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information it collects, uses or discloses is accurate, complete and up-to date.

4. Data security

The Church will take reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from misuse, loss and from unauthorised access modification or disclosure.

5. Openness

The Church must have a document outlining its information handling practices and make this available to anyone who asks for it.

6. Access and correction

An individual has the right to access the personal information that the Church holds about them (although there are some exceptions).

7. Identifiers

The Church must not adopt, use or disclose, an identifier that has been assigned by a Commonwealth government agency (e.g. Tax file number, Medicare number).

8. Anonymity

Organisations must give people the option to interact anonymously whenever it is lawful and practicable to do.

9. Trans-border data flows

The Church can only transfer personal information to a recipient in a foreign country in circumstances where the information will have appropriate protection.

10. Sensitive Information

An organisation must not collect sensitive information unless the individual has consented, it is required to do so by law or the collection is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of any individual.

4. 1 The National Privacy Principle - 1: Collection

Summary:

Collection of personal information must be fair, lawful and not intrusive. A person must be told the church's name; the purpose of collection; and how to get access to their personal information; and what happens if the person chooses not to give the information.

Practical example:

The “Perfect CRC Church” ask visitors to complete a Welcome Card and put it in the offering plate. To comply with the Privacy Act, this card should now include a statement like the following:

“The “Perfect CRC Church” is a caring Christian Community. The information gathered on this form will be given to a member of the Pastoral Care Team who may make contact with you. This is done in order to allow the Church to pastorally care for you. You are free not to complete any part of this form, however, by doing so you may limit our ability to make further contact with you.

If you wish to access any personal information held about you or want to find out more about the Church’s privacy policy, please contact the

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

What information can we collect?

Information includes data collected on forms and informal notes taken by a Pastor or church member.

It also includes material that has been come across by accident or has not been asked for directly.

You should only collect information that is relevant to the purpose for which it is being collected. e.g. baptism, marriage, funeral, church camp, craft group, kids' club, community course.

When personal information is obtained from a “third party” (Refer Appendix 1: Definitions), you must seek permission from the person concerned before using it.

Individuals must be given the option of choosing not to have their personal information used by the Church. This is called an “opt out” clause. (Refer Appendix 1: Definitions).

Collecting information on paper

Written consent is the best consent.

When information is collected, the following dot points below should be included on the form.

- the identity of the Church and how to contact it;

- that the person can access the information;
- why the information is collected;
- to whom the information will be disclosed, (Refer Section 4.2 Use and Disclosure Principle)
- any law that requires the particular information to be collected; and
- the consequences (if any) for the individual if the information isn't provided.

An alternative is to use the standard Privacy Information Brochure (copy enclosed) and distribute it whenever you collect information.

Collecting information verbally

In many cases a Church will e.g. ultimately collect information about a person or persons other than through the use of a printed form.

Wherever possible you should still seek consent to collect and retain the information.

Church offices

Church offices are usually staffed by a team of volunteers. It is important that they are familiar with the principles of the Privacy Act.

Three simple things that you can do are:

- **Phone messages** – The person taking the message should only record essential information. They should not ask questions that may encourage the caller to disclose personal or sensitive information.
- **Phone pads** – Message pads should not be left in a public place where others can view personal or sensitive information. Care should also be taken with message pads with carbon copies.
- **Standard message sheet** – It may be helpful to have a standard sheet for collecting information to encourage a standard process. This sheet could include the statement "*Do you consent to this personal information being recorded and given to other appropriate persons in the church?*"

Collecting information via a website

If collected on-line, the website must include a clearly identified privacy statement. This must be prominent and users should not have to move through a number of pages to reach it.

Age of Consent

The Privacy Act does not specify an age after which individuals can make their own privacy decisions.

The Church's standard practice of requesting parents / guardians to give consent for their child's participation in an activity still applies.

That is, when a Church needs to collect information about an individual who is under 18, it must make every effort to ensure that the parent / guardian provides express consent to information being collected.

Contractors

When a congregation enters into an agreement with a contractor, and that contractor will have access to personal information, the contract should include a clause stating that the contractor will adhere to the Privacy Act.

Practical example:

"Perfect CRC Church" decides to employ a stewardship consultant to assist in the biennial stewardship program. When the congregation enters into a contract with the consultant it should ensure that the agreement includes compliance with the Privacy Act.

This will ensure that the consultant won't divulge personal information to any third party.

Record Keeping

You should keep a record of all information you collect. (Refer Section 6: Keeping a Privacy Register)

4. 2 The National Privacy Principle - 2: Use and Disclosure

Summary:

A Church should only use or disclose information for the purpose it was collected (primary purpose) unless the person has consented, or the secondary purpose is related to the primary purpose and a person would reasonably expect such use or disclosure.

Practical Example:

Each member of "Perfect CRC Church" has their contact details published in a directory.

To free the church to use this data for broader purposes, it is recommended that at the time the information is collected, consent is also obtained to use the information for any other related church activity.

The consent form should also include an "opt out" clause so that the person can state if they only want this information to be used for the directory and no other secondary purpose.

An example of an "opt out clause" is:

Please tick this box if you wish your details to ONLY be used in our directory and not to be available for any other church related activity.

To

fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

There are a number of situations where it is appropriate to disclose information:

- When it is required by law or by a law enforcement agency;
- To lessen a serious threat to a person's health or safety;
- When it is in the same context as the indicated purpose (related use); or
- When consent has been obtained.
- Sensitive Information

Sensitive information, such as medical and counselling information, should not be used for any other purpose than that stated at the time of collection, unless consent has been obtained. (Refer Section 4.10 Sensitive Information).

- Serious threats to life, health or safety

Personal information may be given out where it is believed that there is a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the person concerned or to a third party.

Where personal information is disclosed in these circumstances, it is very important that a record of the disclosure be kept.

Practical example:

Charlie Smith is a haemophiliac and is now HIV positive as a result of a blood transfusion. Charlie is a group leader at a Day Camp. Whilst participating in a recreational activity, Charlie slips and cuts himself quite severely. An ambulance is called. The qualified first aid volunteer has access to medical records of all delegates at the Day Camp and is aware of Charlie's medical condition.

In this instance there are two types of threats: the first to Charlie himself and the other to the ambulance personnel and hospital staff. In this instance, it would be appropriate for the first aid volunteer to inform the ambulance staff about Charlie's condition so they can treat his cut both appropriately and safely. It is also very important that this information is given in a discrete manner.

Direct Mailing

There may be occasions where the Church will use personal information for direct mailing purposes.

Only non-sensitive personal information can be used for direct marketing.

Recipients must be given the opportunity to "opt out". (Refer Appendix 1: Definitions)

Information collected by the Church cannot be passed onto any other organisation so that the latter can use this information to direct market unless consent has been given.

Unlawful Activity

A Church can use or disclose personal information when it has reason to suspect that an unlawful activity has occurred.

Required or Authorised by Law

A Church will use or disclose personal information where this is required by Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation, or by the Common Law. This is a legal obligation.

Where the use or disclosure of personal information is authorised by law, the Church can decide for itself whether to disclose the information or not.

4. 3 The National Privacy Principle - 3: Data Quality

Summary:

The Church will take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information it collects, uses or discloses is accurate, complete and up-to date.

Practical Example:

The church produces an annual directory. It would be reasonable to expect that all members in that directory would have the opportunity to update their details or opt out of inclusion in the directory at the time of its reprinting.

If the church was informed part way during the year that someone no-longer wished to be included in the directory, it would not be necessary to re-call all directories. However, any directories held in reserve should be updated.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles.

Correcting information

A Church must take reasonable steps to correct information about an individual where that information is not accurate, up-to-date and complete.

If an individual and a Church are unable to agree about whether personal information is accurate, up-to-date and complete, the Church must, at the request of the individual, take reasonable steps to note on the person's record their claim that the information held on them it is not accurate, complete and up-to-date.

4. 4 The National Privacy Principle - 4: Data Security

Summary:

The Church will take reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from misuse, loss and from unauthorised access modification or disclosure.

Practical Example:

It has been common practice for churches to invite people to sign a visitor's book. This has enabled the congregation to send the visitor a welcome letter. The book has also been available for anyone to access in the church foyer.

To be compliant with the Privacy Act, this method of collection is no longer suitable. Individual cards that can be handed to the door steward or into the offering bag are the best option. If, however, the visitor's book is only used for entry of names and a comment, then it is fine to continue with this practice

Practical Example:

Church directories should not be kept in the foyer for anyone to access. All surplus directories should be held in a secure location, and made available upon request.

Practical Example:

"Perfect CRC Church" run the following activities: KUCA Camp Out, Ignite (a youth group activity), Alpha, Cancer Support Group, Adult Fellowship, Marriage Preparation Courses and 4 soccer teams.

The Church Management Team has decided to place all personal information into an electronic database and that only the office administrator should have full access to the database. It has also decided that each activity co-ordinator should only be able to access the part of the database relevant to them.

A hardcopy of all original data will be kept in a secure location for future reference.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

Storage and Back up

- All paper records should be kept in lockable storage in a central location, e.g. a filing cabinet.
- All computers should be password protected with the passwords updated on a regular basis. Where multiple users access computers it is advisable to limit access to only the files they need to use.
- When sending emails to multiple recipients, addresses should be placed in the BCC (blind copy) field.
- Back up files should also be held in a secure location.

Destroying records

- Information no longer needed should be destroyed.
- Personal information should only be destroyed by secure means. e.g. shredding, incineration.
- Garbage disposal or recycling of documents should only be used for documents that do not contain personal information.

Sharing information

If personal information is shared via phone, fax or e-mail, the Church should take every step to ensure the information is sent to the intended recipient. Such steps will include double-checking facsimile numbers and e-mail addresses before sending personal information, and confirming receipt; and checking a person's identity before giving out personal information over the telephone.

4. 5 The National Privacy Principle - 5: Openness

Summary:

The Church must have a document outlining its information handling practices and make this available to anyone who asks for it.

Practical Example:

A copy of the CRC Churches International Information Brochure is enclosed with this manual for your use. A copy of this document is also available on the web site and can be downloaded.

You will need to add your local congregation's details before duplicating and distributing in your congregation.

If you need to tailor it to your own requirements (e.g. because you will most likely be an incorporated body) you will need to refer to the check list below. If you amend the document please forward a copy to the National Office so that any improvements or additions can be shared with other churches.

The document should be easily accessible. It may be appropriate to include on the Church's web site and noticeboard.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

In most cases the enclosed Privacy Information Brochure will cover events and activities run by the church. However if you need to create your own document, the following must be included:

- the Church's contact details;
- the name,
- street and postal addresses,
- the main telephone and fax numbers and
- appropriate e-mail addresses;
- the kinds of personal information the Church holds;
- the main purposes for which the Church holds the information;
- how the information is collected;
- how the Church stores or secures information (but it is not required to give specific details of security measures that would jeopardise the security of the personal information it holds.)
- how the information will be used;
- who the information will be disclosed to;
- how to contact the Privacy Contact Person;
- how the Church handles requests for access to personal information.

4. 6 The National Privacy Principle - 6: Access and Correction

Summary:

An individual has the right to access the personal information that the Church holds about them (although there are some exceptions).

Practical Example:

Jenny's parents are divorced and share joint custody of Jenny. Jenny's Day Camp registration has the contact details for both Jenny's mother and father. Jenny's father has made a request to access the personal details held about Jenny and him.

The Church does not have to refuse access to the details as long as it is able to remove details of Jenny's mother from the document before it is released to Jenny's father or consent has been given by Jenny's mother.

Practical Example:

John Brown has concerns about the information that the stewardship recorder has in relation to his planned giving.

John contacts the Privacy Contact Person who, in turn, contacts the stewardship recorder and arranges for the information to be available for John to view.

The Privacy Contact Person does not need to personally view the information, simply to oversee the process. This ensures John's privacy is maintained.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

Checklist for requests to view personal information

Prior to granting a person access to the information that the Church holds about them, the Privacy Contact Person should follow this basic checklist:

1. Ask for the request in writing.
2. Record the request in the Privacy Register. (Refer Appendix 1: Definitions)
3. Determine if an exception should be used.

The only exceptions are:

- it is unlawful to provide the information;
- it poses a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of any individual;
- it has an unreasonable impact upon the privacy of other individuals; or
- the request is frivolous or vexatious.

If an exception is used, the Privacy Contact Person is required to give their reasons for denying access or refusing to correct personal information. However, this is not required where such a disclosure would prejudice an investigation against fraud or other unlawful activity.

4. Acknowledge the request and arrange a time to view the information.
A request to access personal information does not need to be acted upon immediately.
A written request for access should be acknowledged within 14 days.
If granting access is straight forward, it is appropriate for the Church to grant access within 14 days, or if giving it is more complicated, within 30 days.
5. Authenticate the identity of the person seeking access to the personal information (e.g. photo ID).
6. If the information needs to be corrected this should be done as soon as possible. (Refer Section 4.3: Data Quality)
7. If the individual is not happy with the outcome, contact the CRC National Office Privacy Officer. (Refer Section 8: Enquiries and Complaints).

4. 7 The National Privacy Principle - 7: Identifiers

Summary:

The Church must not adopt, use or disclose an identifier that has been assigned by a Commonwealth government agency (e.g. Tax file number, Medicare number).

Practical Example:

The church office has prepared a database of its members.

The church office can use its own ID (identification) codes to identify members of the church if it wishes.

It cannot adopt a tax file or Medicare number as that ID code.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles.

4. 8 The National Privacy Principle - 8: Anonymity

Summary:

Organisations must give people the option to interact anonymously whenever it is lawful and practicable to do.

Practical Example:

Anthony Smith has recently moved into the local community. On his first visit to the "Perfect CRC Church" he is asked to fill out a visitor's form.

The form states that the information requested is used to help the Church pastorally care for all its members. Anthony politely passes up the opportunity to fill in the form.

Although Anthony continues to attend worship services, the Church must respect his right to remain relatively anonymous. Should Anthony fill out the form, or have his personal information collected in some other manner, it should be at Anthony's initiative and not at the Church's initiative.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

Unless a Church has a good practical reason (which must be described at the time of collection, e.g. "we want to send you information about our church") or legal reason to require identification, people must be given the opportunity to remain anonymous.

4. 9 The National Privacy Principle - 9: Trans-border data flows

Summary:

The Church can only transfer personal information to a recipient in a foreign country in circumstances where the information will have appropriate protection.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

Before a Church sends any personal information internationally it must obtain the individual's consent and the individual's directions for secure transfer of the information.

4. 10 National Privacy Principle - 10: Sensitive Information

Summary:

An organisation must not collect sensitive information unless the individual has consented, it is required to do so by law, or the collection is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of any individual.

Practical Example:

Michael is going into hospital to have an operation on his prostate. To prayerfully support people who are part of the Church's faith community who are either unwell or going into hospital, his Church has established a prayer chain. The Church also prays for these people in the intercessory prayer during worship services.

Michael's consent must be obtained before his operation is mentioned either on the prayer chain or during intercessory prayer. If Michael does give his consent, he must also indicate what level of information he wishes the faith community to know.

Practical Example:

Betty Jones has confided in her Pastor that she has cancer during a counselling session.

The church is planning a healing service. It is inappropriate for the Minister to ask the office administrator to send Betty an invitation to attend the service because, under the Privacy Act, medical information is classified as sensitive information.

However, it would be okay for the Minister to personally and discreetly invite Betty or to extend a general invitation from the pulpit.

To fully comply with this principle you should refer to the enclosed copy of the National Privacy Principles, however, in summary you should note the following:

“Sensitive information” is information about an individual’s racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, membership of a political association, religious beliefs or affiliations, philosophical beliefs, membership of a professional or trade association, membership of a trade union, sexual preferences or practices, criminal record or health information.

A Church will only collect and use sensitive information where the individual has consented.

Further consent will be obtained if sensitive information is to be used for another use other than the purpose stated at the time of collection.

If a person cannot give consent due to some incapacity, consent can be obtained from the individual’s guardian.

If an individual does not give consent, the individual must be made aware of the consequences.

Sensitive information should not be collected on the off chance that it will be helpful to have it some time in the future.

Sensitive information should be destroyed when no longer required.

Practical Example:

The parents of a child planning to attend church family camp are asked to complete a medical form.

This information is gathered as part of creating and ensuring a safe environment, and to help in the case of an emergency. If you think this information is helpful to have another purpose (e.g. for the weekly Kids Club) you should specify this on the consent form and give an option to “opt out”.

5. Conducting an audit

Conducting an Audit will allow you to assess what action (if any) needs to be taken.

You will need to audit any activity that involves the collection of personal information. These may include:

- Church groups (e.g. Sunday school, kids’ club, youth group, sports team, fellowship groups, home groups, prayer network)
- Outreach programs (e.g. Alpha group, craft group, playgroup)
- Pastoral care program
- Church sponsored excursions and camps
- Church publications (e.g. directories, community newsletter)
- Stewardship program
- Pastor’s counselling notes
- Preparation for baptism, marriage, funerals

Audit checklist:

Make a list of the activities that your church runs that involve collecting information.

Photocopy an audit information sheet (template enclosed) for each activity.

In consultation with the co-ordinator/s for each activity, complete an Audit Information sheet. A sample of how to complete the form is enclosed. (Refer Appendix 3)

As you complete each audit, put together an action plan outlining the further tasks you need to take to ensure compliance. These may include:

- destroying information that is no longer required;
- correcting current information;
- determining what information held is “sensitive information” and taking appropriate action;
- making any appropriate changes to how you store information. Distribution methods may need to be revised – e.g. directories.

File each Audit Information sheet in your Privacy Register. It is important that you keep this information so that you have a record of how you conducted your audit. (Refer Section 6: Keeping a Privacy Register)

6. Keeping a privacy register

The Church’s Privacy Contact Person should keep a register.

A “register” is a record of all matters relating to compliance with the Privacy Act in your church. It should include:

- A record of how the Privacy Act has been implemented in your church (e.g. when and how your congregation was informed about the Act, and any action that your Church Council has taken)
- Audit information sheets for each activity;
- A copy of your Privacy Compliance Certificate;
- A record of any enquiries or complaints made in relation to personal information.
- A record of any disclosure of any personal information other than what consent has been gained for.
- A record of all requests to “opt out.”
- All records will be kept for a minimum of seven years unless directed by law or the Privacy Commissioner to do otherwise.
- Other important information about church records

It should also be noted that some church records might be required to be permanently held and not destroyed e.g.. Funerals & Memberships.

The Register of Marriages should also be permanently held.

All of these records should be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet or cupboard.

7. Check list for collection of information

In future, when you collect information you will need to adhere to the Privacy Act.

It is best to request all information in writing. If information is collected verbally it should be verified for correctness.

This check list gives you 11 simple steps to follow.

1. Clearly state **who** is collecting the information. (e.g. "Perfect CRC Church" on behalf of the Day Fellowship Group.)
2. Be clear about **what** information is being collected. (e.g. Name, address, phone number, and birthday)
3. State clearly the **purpose** you will use it for (e.g. Our annual Fellowship Directory).
4. Explain who the information will be **disclosed** to. (e.g. The directory will only be distributed to members of the fellowship.)
5. Explain how it will be **stored** (e.g. "We will also keep these details on our church database which is stored in a secure location.")
6. Explain **who** is responsible for updating the information. (e.g. The database is updated annually by the office administrator)
7. Explain that you will **destroy** the information when it is no longer required. (e.g. Information about past members is not kept.)
8. Include an "**opt out**" clause. (e.g. You do not have to complete this form. However, if you choose not to, you may limit the fellowship's ability to pastorally care for you and to send you an annual birthday card.)
9. If your form includes a print out of current data you need to state **where** you got that information from. (e.g. Below is a copy of the details printed in last year's fellowship directory. Please notify us of any changes or incorrect information.)
10. Explain how they can **access** the information that has been collected about them. (e.g. If you wish to view the information we hold about you please contact our Privacy Contact Person.)
11. Include the name and contact details of the **Privacy Contact Person**. (e.g. Perfect CRC Church's Privacy Contact Person is MR I B A Pigeon.)

*If requesting **sensitive information**, you should state in what circumstances you will disclose it. (e.g. If your form includes a statement like "Please tell us if you have any medical conditions or allergies?" you should clarify that the information will only be disclosed in a medical emergency.)*

8. Enquiries and complaints

Enquiries

If an individual has a question about the information that the Church holds about them, they are to enquire with the appropriate Privacy Contact Person.

For more information look at the “Checklist for requests to view personal information.” (Refer Section 4.6 Access and Correction).

If it was felt that an enquiry will lead to a complaint or dispute the Privacy Contact Person should contact the National Office, (see below).

Complaints

If there is a complaint or dispute, the complainant should detail their concerns in writing and forward them to the Local Church Eldership. It should be noted that as CRC Churches International is not, at this time, required to compulsorily abide by the Privacy Act it is unlikely that a complaint would follow the normal procedure. Nevertheless it is possible that, in due course, all churches and religious organisations may find themselves having to abide by the Act. The following procedure outlines the normal processing of complaints and provides a good understanding on how the enforcement of the Privacy Act works.

Alternatively, the individual can complain direct to the Commonwealth Government's Privacy Commissioner.

When the Commissioner receives a complaint, in most cases it will be referred back to the Church to give the congregation and or State/National body the chance to resolve the complaint directly.

If the individual and the Church cannot resolve the complaint between themselves, the Privacy Commissioner will become involved using letters and phone calls, or in some cases, face-to-face meetings. In the majority of cases, the complaint is resolved this way.

As a last resort, the Commissioner can make a formal determination. If the Church does not comply with the determination, either the Commissioner or the complainant can seek to have it enforced by the Federal Court.

A good way of both minimising complaints and keeping things simple is to only use and disclose information in the way that was described at the time of collection.

Appendix 1 Definitions

Children and Youth

When a Church seeks to collect information about an individual who is under 18 years, it must make every effort to ensure that the parent / guardian provides express consent to information being collected.

Church

The “Church”, as it relates to this policy, is a Local CRC Church – normally expected to be a separately constituted and incorporated body.

Compliance

“Compliance” means doing what the Privacy Amendment Act 2000 and the Church’s Privacy Policy says you should.

Consent

“Consent” means a voluntary agreement to some act, practice or purpose.

It has two elements: knowledge of the matter agreed to, and voluntary agreement.

Consent can be express or implied. Express consent is given explicitly, either orally or in writing.

Implied consent arises where consent may reasonably be inferred in the circumstances from the conduct of the individual and the Church.

Consent is invalid if there is extreme pressure or coercion.

Only a competent individual can give consent, although an organisation can ordinarily assume competency unless there is something to alert it otherwise.

Contractors

A “contractor” is an entity / organisation that enters into a relationship (contractual or other) with the Church where the entity / organisation:

- supplies services to the Church; or
- supplies services to someone else on behalf of the Church; and
- the relationship involves the entity / organisation handling personal information in some way. This might be a Home Help agency, a health care service or a tradesman.

When a congregation enters into an agreement with a contractor, and that contractor will have access to personal information, the contract should include a clause stating that the contractor will adhere to the Privacy Act.

Disclosure

In general terms, the Church discloses personal information when it releases information to others outside the part of the Church that collected the information. It does not include giving individuals information about themselves.

Employee

An “employee” is a person paid to perform specific duties on behalf of the Church. The application of this definition, as it relates to the Privacy Legislation, means a Minister is an employee of the Church.

Exemptions

Employee records are not covered under the Privacy Act. e.g. Employers have the right to collect personal and sensitive information about employees without their consent.

This exemption does not include contractors, sub contractors and prospective employees.

Prospective employees (applied for a job and or had a job interview) who do not enter into an employee relationship with the Church have the same rights as any other individual with regard to making complaints under this Act.

Opt out

An “opt out” statement offers an individual choice concerning the continued use of their personal information.

The following should be standard:

- the chance to opt out is clearly stated and likely to be understood by the individual;
- the individual is likely to be aware of the implications of opting out;
- opting in or opting out is clearly shown and not bundled with other statements;
- opting out involves little or no financial cost to, and little effort from, the individual;
- the consequences of failing to opt out are harmless.

Personal information

“Personal information” is information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database) whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion. It includes all personal information regardless of its source. Personal information only relates to a natural living person.

Privacy information brochure

The “privacy information brochure” informs an individual how personal information collected about them is used and stored. It also lets the same individual know how to access and correct information held about them.

Privacy register

A “register” is a record of all matters relating to compliance with the Privacy Act in your church. It should include a copy of all audit sheets, a record of any disclosures, and any enquiries or complaints made to the Privacy Contact Person.

Sensitive Information

“Sensitive information” is information about an individual’s racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, membership of a political association, religious beliefs or affiliations, philosophical beliefs, membership of a professional or trade association, membership of a trade union, sexual preferences or practices, criminal record or health information.

Third party

When the Church obtains or discloses personal information to a person other than the individual concerned, that person is called a “third party.”

Use

In general terms, “use” refers to the handling of personal information within an organisation including the inclusion of information in a publication.

Volunteers

“Volunteers” have the same rights as any other private individual with regard to making complaints under this Act. Volunteers must also comply with the standards set out in this manual.

Appendix 2

National Privacy Principles

The Australian Privacy commissioner's website at www.privacy.gov.au contains helpful information about the Privacy Act.

This paper is extract from the "Guidelines to the National Privacy Principles (Sept 2001)" located at http://www.privacy.gov.au/publications/nppgl_01.doc

1. Collection

- 1.1 An organisation must not collect personal information unless the information is necessary for one or more of its functions or activities.
- 1.2 An organisation must collect personal information only by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way.
- 1.3 At or before the time (or, if that is not practicable, as soon as practicable after) an organisation collects personal information about an individual from the individual, the organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure that the individual is aware of:
 - (a) the identity of the organisation and how to contact it; and
 - (b) the fact that he or she is able to gain access to the information; and
 - (c) the purposes for which the information is collected; and
 - (d) the organisations (or the types of organisations) to which the organisation usually discloses information of that kind; and
 - (e) any law that requires the particular information to be collected; and
 - (f) the main consequences (if any) for the individual if all or part of the information is not provided.
- 1.4 If it is reasonable and practicable to do so, an organisation must collect personal information about an individual only from that individual.
- 1.5 If an organisation collects personal information about an individual from someone else, it must take reasonable steps to ensure that the individual is or has been made aware of the matters listed in subclause 1.3 except to the extent that making the individual aware of the matters would pose a serious threat to the life or health of any individual.

2. Use and disclosure

- 2.1 An organisation must not use or disclose personal information about an individual for a purpose (the **secondary purpose**) other than the primary purpose of collection unless:
 - (a) both of the following apply:
 - (i) the secondary purpose is related to the primary purpose of collection and, if the personal information is sensitive information, directly related to the primary purpose of collection;

- (ii) the individual would reasonably expect the organisation to use or disclose the information for the secondary purpose; or
- (b) the individual has consented to the use or disclosure; or
- (c) if the information is not sensitive information and the use of the information is for the secondary purpose of direct marketing:
 - (i) it is impracticable for the organisation to seek the individual's consent before that particular use; and
 - (ii) the organisation will not charge the individual for giving effect to a request by the individual to the organisation not to receive direct marketing communications; and
 - (iii) the individual has not made a request to the organisation not to receive direct marketing communications; and
 - (iv) in each direct marketing communication with the individual, the organisation draws to the individual's attention, or prominently displays a notice, that he or she may express a wish not to receive any further direct marketing communications; and
 - (v) each written direct marketing communication by the organisation with the individual (up to and including the communication that involves the use) sets out the organisation's business address and telephone number and, if the communication with the individual is made by fax, telex or other electronic means, a number or address at which the organisation can be directly contacted electronically; or
- (d) if the information is health information and the use or disclosure is necessary for research, or the compilation or analysis of statistics, relevant to public health or public safety:
 - (i) it is impracticable for the organisation to seek the individual's consent before the use or disclosure; and
 - (ii) the use or disclosure is conducted in accordance with guidelines approved by the Commissioner under section 95A for the purposes of this subparagraph; and
 - (iii) in the case of disclosure—the organisation reasonably believes that the recipient of the health information will not disclose the health information, or personal information derived from the health information; or
- (e) the organisation reasonably believes that the use or disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent:
 - (i) a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health or safety; or
 - (ii) a serious threat to public health or public safety; or
- (f) the organisation has reason to suspect that unlawful activity has been, is being or may be engaged in, and uses or discloses the personal information as a necessary part of its investigation of the matter or in reporting its concerns to relevant persons or authorities; or

- (g) the use or disclosure is required or authorised by or under law; or
- (h) the organisation reasonably believes that the use or disclosure is reasonably necessary for one or more of the following by or on behalf of an enforcement body:
 - (i) the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of criminal offences, breaches of a law imposing a penalty or sanction or breaches of a prescribed law;
 - (ii) the enforcement of laws relating to the confiscation of the proceeds of crime;
 - (iii) the protection of the public revenue;
 - (iv) the prevention, detection, investigation or remedying of seriously improper conduct or prescribed conduct;
 - (v) the preparation for, or conduct of, proceedings before any court or tribunal, or implementation of the orders of a court or tribunal.

Note 1: It is not intended to deter organisations from lawfully co-operating with agencies performing law enforcement functions in the performance of their functions.

Note 2: Subclause 2.1 does not override any existing legal obligations not to disclose personal information. Nothing in subclause 2.1 requires an organisation to disclose personal information; an organisation is always entitled not to disclose personal information in the absence of a legal obligation to disclose it.

Note 3: An organisation is also subject to the requirements of National Privacy Principle 9 if it transfers personal information to a person in a foreign country.

- 2.2 If an organisation uses or discloses personal information under paragraph 2.1(h), it must make a written note of the use or disclosure.
- 2.3 Subclause 2.1 operates in relation to personal information that an organisation that is a body corporate has collected from a related body corporate as if the organisation's primary purpose of collection of the information were the primary purpose for which the related body corporate collected the information.
- 2.4 Despite subclause 2.1, an organisation that provides a health service to an individual may disclose health information about the individual to a person who is responsible for the individual if:
 - (a) the individual:
 - (i) is physically or legally incapable of giving consent to the disclosure; or
 - (ii) physically cannot communicate consent to the disclosure; and
 - (b) a natural person (the carer) providing the health service for the organisation is satisfied that either:
 - (i) the disclosure is necessary to provide appropriate care or treatment of the individual; or
 - (ii) the disclosure is made for compassionate reasons; and

- (c) the disclosure is not contrary to any wish:
 - (i) expressed by the individual before the individual became unable to give or communicate consent; and
 - (ii) of which the carer is aware, or of which the carer could reasonably be expected to be aware; and
 - (d) the disclosure is limited to the extent reasonable and necessary for a purpose mentioned in paragraph (b).
- 2.5 For the purposes of subclause 2.4, a person is **responsible** for an individual if the person is:
- (a) a parent of the individual; or
 - (b) a child or sibling of the individual and at least 18 years old; or
 - (c) a spouse or de facto spouse of the individual; or
 - (d) a relative of the individual, at least 18 years old and a member of the individual's household; or
 - (e) a guardian of the individual; or
 - (f) exercising an enduring power of attorney granted by the individual that is exercisable in relation to decisions about the individual's health; or
 - (g) a person who has an intimate personal relationship with the individual; or
 - (h) a person nominated by the individual to be contacted in case of emergency.
- 2.6 In subclause 2.5:
- **child** of an individual includes an adopted child, a step-child and a foster-child, of the individual.
 - **parent** of an individual includes a step-parent, adoptive parent and a foster-parent, of the individual.
 - **relative** of an individual means a grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece, of the individual.
 - **sibling** of an individual includes a half-brother, half-sister, adoptive brother, adoptive sister, step-brother, step-sister, foster-brother and foster-sister, of the individual.

3. Data quality

An organisation must take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information it collects, uses or discloses is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

4. Data security

- 4.1 An organisation must take reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.
- 4.2 An organisation must take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information if it is no longer needed for any purpose for which the information may be used or disclosed under National Privacy Principle 2.

5. Openness

- 5.1 An organisation must set out in a document clearly expressed policies on its management of personal information. The organisation must make the document available to anyone who asks for it.
- 5.2 On request by a person, an organisation must take reasonable steps to let the person know, generally, what sort of personal information it holds, for what purposes, and how it collects, holds, uses and discloses that information.

6. Access and correction

- 6.1 If an organisation holds personal information about an individual, it must provide the individual with access to the information on request by the individual, except to the extent that:
 - (a) in the case of personal information other than health information—providing access would pose a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of any individual; or
 - (b) in the case of health information—providing access would pose a serious threat to the life or health of any individual; or
 - (c) providing access would have an unreasonable impact upon the privacy of other individuals; or
 - (d) the request for access is frivolous or vexatious; or
 - (e) the information relates to existing or anticipated legal proceedings between the organisation and the individual, and the information would not be accessible by the process of discovery in those proceedings; or
 - (f) providing access would reveal the intentions of the organisation in relation to negotiations with the individual in such a way as to prejudice those negotiations; or
 - (g) providing access would be unlawful; or
 - (h) denying access is required or authorised by or under law; or
 - (i) providing access would be likely to prejudice an investigation of possible unlawful activity; or
 - (j) providing access would be likely to prejudice:
 - (i) the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of criminal offences, breaches of a law imposing a penalty or sanction or breaches of a prescribed law; or
 - (ii) the enforcement of laws relating to the confiscation of the proceeds of crime; or
 - (iii) the protection of the public revenue; or
 - (iv) the prevention, detection, investigation or remedying of seriously improper conduct or prescribed conduct; or
 - (v) the preparation for, or conduct of, proceedings before any court or tribunal, or implementation of its orders; by or on behalf of an enforcement body; or

- (k) an enforcement body performing a lawful security function asks the organisation not to provide access to the information on the basis that providing access would be likely to cause damage to the security of Australia.
- 6.2 However, where providing access would reveal evaluative information generated within the organisation in connection with a commercially sensitive decision-making process, the organisation may give the individual an explanation for the commercially sensitive decision rather than direct access to the information.
- Note: An organisation breaches subclause 6.1 if it relies on subclause 6.2 to give an individual an explanation for a commercially sensitive decision in circumstances where subclause 6.2 does not apply.*
- 6.3 If the organisation is not required to provide the individual with access to the information because of one or more of paragraphs 6.1(a) to (k) (inclusive), the organisation must, if reasonable, consider whether the use of mutually agreed intermediaries would allow sufficient access to meet the needs of both parties.
- 6.4 If an organisation charges for providing access to personal information, those charges:
- (a) must not be excessive; and
 - (b) must not apply to lodging a request for access.
- 6.5 If an organisation holds personal information about an individual and the individual is able to establish that the information is not accurate, complete and up-to-date, the organisation must take reasonable steps to correct the information so that it is accurate, complete and up-to-date.
- 6.6 If the individual and the organisation disagree about whether the information is accurate, complete and up-to-date, and the individual asks the organisation to associate with the information a statement claiming that the information is not accurate, complete or up-to-date, the organisation must take reasonable steps to do so.
- 6.7 An organisation must provide reasons for denial of access or a refusal to correct personal information.

7. Identifiers

- 7.1 An organisation must not adopt as its own identifier of an individual an identifier of the individual that has been assigned by:
- (a) an agency; or
 - (b) an agent of an agency acting in its capacity as agent; or
 - (c) a contracted service provider for a Commonwealth contract acting in its capacity as contracted service provider for that contract.
- 7.1A However, subclause 7.1 does not apply to the adoption by a prescribed organisation of a prescribed identifier in prescribed circumstances.
- Note: There are prerequisites that must be satisfied before those matters are prescribed: see subsection 100(2).*

- 7.2 An organisation must not use or disclose an identifier assigned to an individual by an agency, or by an agent or contracted service provider mentioned in subclause 7.1, unless:
- (a) the use or disclosure is necessary for the organisation to fulfil its obligations to the agency; or
 - (b) one or more of paragraphs 2.1(e) to 2.1(h) (inclusive) apply to the use or disclosure; or
 - (c) the use or disclosure is by a prescribed organisation of a prescribed identifier in prescribed circumstances.

Note: There are prerequisites that must be satisfied before the matters mentioned in paragraph (c) are prescribed: see subsection 100(2).

- 7.3 In this clause:

identifier includes a number assigned by an organisation to an individual to identify uniquely the individual for the purposes of the organisation's operations. However, an individual's name or ABN (as defined in the A New Tax System (Australian Business Number) Act 1999) is not an **identifier**.

8. Anonymity

Wherever it is lawful and practicable, individuals must have the option of not identifying themselves when entering transactions with an organisation.

9. Trans-border data flows

An organisation in Australia or an external Territory may transfer personal information about an individual to someone (other than the organisation or the individual) who is in a foreign country only if:

- (a) the organisation reasonably believes that the recipient of the information is subject to a law, binding scheme or contract which effectively upholds principles for fair handling of the information that are substantially similar to the National Privacy Principles; or
- (b) the individual consents to the transfer; or
- (c) the transfer is necessary for the performance of a contract between the individual and the organisation, or for the implementation of pre-contractual measures taken in response to the individual's request; or
- (d) the transfer is necessary for the conclusion or performance of a contract concluded in the interest of the individual between the organisation and a third party; or
- (e) all of the following apply:
 - (i) the transfer is for the benefit of the individual;
 - (ii) it is impracticable to obtain the consent of the individual to that transfer;
 - (iii) if it were practicable to obtain such consent, the individual would be likely to give it; or the organisation has taken reasonable steps to ensure that the information which it has transferred will not be held, used or disclosed by the recipient of the information inconsistently with the National Privacy Principles.

10. Sensitive information

- 10.1 An organisation must not collect sensitive information about an individual unless:
- (a) the individual has consented; or
 - (b) the collection is required by law; or
 - (c) the collection is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of any individual, where the individual whom the information concerns:
 - (i) is physically or legally incapable of giving consent to the collection; or
 - (ii) physically cannot communicate consent to the collection; or
 - (d) if the information is collected in the course of the activities of a non-profit organisation—the following conditions are satisfied:
 - (i) the information relates solely to the members of the organisation or to individuals who have regular contact with it in connection with its activities;
 - (ii) at or before the time of collecting the information, the organisation undertakes to the individual whom the information concerns that the organisation will not disclose the information without the individual's consent; or
 - (e) the collection is necessary for the establishment, exercise or defence of a legal or equitable claim.
- 10.2 Despite subclause 10.1, an organisation may collect health information about an individual if:
- (a) the information is necessary to provide a health service to the individual; and
 - (b) the information is collected:
 - (i) as required by law (other than this Act); or
 - (ii) in accordance with rules established by competent health or medical bodies that deal with obligations of professional confidentiality which bind the organisation.
- 10.3 Despite subclause 10.1, an organisation may collect health information about an individual if:
- (a) the collection is necessary for any of the following purposes:
 - (i) research relevant to public health or public safety;
 - (ii) the compilation or analysis of statistics relevant to public health or public safety;
 - (iii) the management, funding or monitoring of a health service; and
 - (b) that purpose cannot be served by the collection of information that does not identify the individual or from which the individual's identity cannot reasonably be ascertained; and
 - (c) it is impracticable for the organisation to seek the individual's consent to the collection; and

- (d) the information is collected:
- (i) as required by law (other than this Act); or
 - (ii) in accordance with rules established by competent health or medical bodies that deal with obligations of professional confidentiality which bind the organisation; or
 - (iii) in accordance with guidelines approved by the Commissioner under section 95A for the purposes of this subparagraph.
- 10.4 If an organisation collects health information about an individual in accordance with subclause 10.3, the organisation must take reasonable steps to permanently de-identify the information before the organisation discloses it.
- 10.5 In this clause:
- non-profit organisation** means a non-profit organisation that has only racial, ethnic, political, religious, philosophical, professional, trade, or trade union aims.

Appendix 3 Audit Information Sheet Example

Name of activity: The Perfect Youth Group

Question & Example	Answer	Further action required?	T a s k D o n e ?
<p>What type of information is collected? <i>(e.g. Contact details, family information, date of birth, medical details)</i> <i>Manual reference: 4.1</i></p>	Name, address, phone numbers, email, birthday, school, parent's contact details, medical details, personal notes from youth worker, critical incident information forms, police check record releases.	Nil.	✓
<p>Does this information include "sensitive information?" <i>(e.g. medical records, counselling notes)</i> <i>Manual reference: 4.10</i></p>	Yes – medical conditions, personal notes.	Nil.	✓
<p>Has consent been given to hold the information stated in the above answers? <i>Manual reference: 4.1</i></p>	No.	Seek written consent.	
<p>Purpose of collection? <i>(e.g. To ensure safety, pastoral care)</i> <i>Manual reference: 4.1</i></p>	General information – for communication. Medical – safety. Personal notes – pastoral care.		
<p>Is it relevant? Do we need to collect it? <i>(e.g.? Yes.)</i> <i>Manual reference: 4.1; 4.2</i></p>	Yes. Some of the personal notes made by youth worker may be questionable.	Check this matter with Synod Privacy Officer. <i>Note: If you answer "No" you must delete this information.</i>	
<p>Is the information we have correct? <i>(e.g. Don't know)</i> <i>Manual reference: 4.3</i></p>	Not sure how long since medical information was checked.	Check the date of collection and if unsure will confirm with each member. <i>Note: If you answer "No" you must destroy or update your information.</i>	

Question & Example	Answer	Further action required?	T a s k D o n e ?
How often is the information updated? (e.g. annually)	General - annually, with additions as new members join. Medical - not sure. Should be updated annually and when we hold camps.	Ensure Youth Worker implements this.	
Who is it collected from? (e.g. the individual or a third party?)	Most comes from individuals. Some from word of mouth.	Check the word of mouth information to ensure relevance. Destroy information that is not necessary. <i>Note: If you answered "third party" consent should be sought from the individual.</i>	
How is it collected? (e.g. verbally or by form)	Most verbally, some is gained from camp forms.		✓
Is the person who collects the information aware of the Privacy Act and its implications? (e.g. Elder, minister, fellowship leader)	Youth worker - sort of Other members of youth group - no	Need to train Youth worker and have a standard collection form. <i>Note: If you answered "no" – do you need to offer training?</i>	
Is the information being used for the purpose it was originally collected for? (e.g. No. Alpha Newsletter is sent to people who registered for our craft group)	Yes.	Note we were planning to send stewardship invites to youth group members - need to include an "opt out" clause.	
Manual reference: 4.2			
Where is the information stored? Is it secure? (e.g. church office, foyer, individual's home)	Youth worker's filing cabinet - no lock. Keeps his folder in back seat of his car. Church data base - at least 8 people know password. Minister's Laptop - no password.	Arrange locks for filing cabinet. Arrange individual passwords. Arrange password security for minister's laptop. <i>Note: If you answered "no" – you will need to make it secure.</i>	
Manual reference: 4.4			

Question & Example	Answer	Further action required?	T a s k D o n e ?
Is access to the information limited to only those people who need it? (e.g. anyone with a key to the storage cupboard can get it) Manual reference: 4.4	Yes. Changes above will fix current problems. Note: When we send group emails we must use BCC field to insert addresses.	Check that Office Administrator knows what BCC is (Blind Copy) <i>Note: If you answered "no" – you may need to limit access.</i>	
Is the distribution method of collected information appropriate? (e.g. pigeon holes and foyer table are open to anyone to access) Manual reference: 4.4	Yes - The youth group directory is given personally to each member by Youth Worker during a pastoral care visit.	<i>Note: If you answered "no" – you may need to rethink your distribution method.</i>	✓
What needs to be done next time we update this information? (e.g. distribute Privacy Information Brochure, add appropriate wording to registration forms) Manual reference: 4.5; 4.6; 7	Include church's privacy statement on all material we use to collect information.	Include request for consent on all forms. Lapsed members need to be removed from general list. Check consent on Drivers and medical forms.	

All sections of this form have been completed and steps are in place to undertake any actions required.

I B A Pigeon
Privacy Contact Person's Signature
Date

T Jones
Activity Co-ordinator's Signature

21/12/2001

We wish to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the Privacy Officer of the United Church in South Australia, Mr Barry Atwell, for allowing us to adapt and use the Uniting Church of South Australia's Privacy Manual.

LOCAL CHURCH DELEGATES GUIDELINES

CRC Churches International - Australia

Background:

The idea of a representative delegate system for our CRC Churches was presented as an important initiative by Pastor Bill Vasilakis, just prior to his election as National Chairman in May 2002. The proposal, outlined in his March 2002 booklet, explained how a delegate system would help the Movement become more interdependent and truly express the intent of our Charter “that the CRC is a **fellowship of local churches and ministers**” – and not just a fellowship of ministers. This initiative with some alterations by the National Executive was decided upon by the National Council in May 2005.

The previous representative system only recognised nationally credentialled ministers who as members of the National Council had voting rights. Our State Councils were also comprised only of both Nationally credentialed and Credentialled ministers. A local Church as an entity in itself did not have representation or voting rights at our National and State Councils. It was not uncommon for our smaller churches (without a Nationally credentialled or Credentialled minister) to have no representation at our National or State Councils, even though they faithfully paid their levies and their leaders attended our Council meetings.

The Delegate System addresses the deficiencies of our previous arrangements and gives appropriate voting rights to our churches at both State and National levels. A local church delegate will have voting rights at our National and State Council meetings without being an official member of the National and State Council who still must be people who hold either a National Minister’s Credential or a Minister’s Credential.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE DELEGATE SYSTEM:

1.1 Number of Representatives:

Nationally credentialled ministers would continue to be members of the National Council and Credentialled ministers (along with

Nationally credentialled ministers) would be members of the State Council.

IN ADDITION – each church would also have one representative able to vote at both State and National Council meetings.

1.2 Church Representatives:

- A Local Church delegate should be a serving elder of the church, or a man or woman scripturally suited to eldership. If a local church is led by a Trainee, State or Affiliate credentialled minister, the Eldership Board may select him/her to be their delegate representative able to vote at the National and their respective State Council.
- Delegates need to be recommended by their Eldership Boards to the appropriate State Executive for approval.
- Approval would generally be automatic but the State Executive have the option of precluding/deferring someone if known impediments exist and delegates must have the continuing confidence of their State Executive.
- A separate register of representatives will be maintained by the National Office and will ensure church representatives are included in National and State mail-outs.
- Local church delegates cannot stand for National or State constitutionally elected official positions (i.e. Officers and Executives) as only Nationally credentialled ministers are eligible.

1.3. Advantages of the Delegate System:

- 1.3.1 All local churches now have voting rights on our Councils, even if they don't have a senior minister or if their senior minister has a credential other than a National credential. This removes the previous anomaly of some churches having no formal representation at our National and State Council gatherings.
- 1.3.2 Delegates, in most cases, would be drawn from the Eldership Boards of our churches. Having Elders and key ministry leaders as delegates will establish stronger links between churches and our State and National organisations.
- 1.3.3 This system builds networks and strengthens the linkage of our Elders within our Movement – which is in line with the sentiments of our Senior Ministers and Eldership Board Guidelines.
- 1.3.4 The attendances of our State and National conferences should increase.

- 1.3.5 The culture of our Movement will gradually change to be more interdependent and accountable, which is an outworking of our core values.
- 1.3.6 As our credentialling process is now extended to six years (becoming more character and competency based) the pressure to prematurely credential someone, so that a church can have voting rights on our Councils, is removed.
- 1.3.7 The smaller churches of our Movement benefit – they now enjoy a greater sense of validation and increased self-esteem through having voting representatives at our State and National Councils.

1.4. Possible Difficulties of our Delegate System With a Response

- 1.4.1 It may be difficult to ensure the spiritual suitability of delegates (unlike the current system in which Council representatives are subject to a rigorous credentialling process) as there is presently no formal assessment or appointment criteria for elders. **However our Senior Ministers/Eldership Boards guidelines address this matter.**
- 1.4.2 Some elders are good “business people” but may not necessarily be deep spiritually or ministry minded. This could change the dynamics of Council meetings. **The spirituality of elders is addressed in our Senior Ministers/Eldership Boards Guidelines.**
- 1.4.3 Attendance at conferences by secularly employed delegates may be more difficult, and potentially exclude some of the more fitting delegates being appointed. **Unfortunately this is also the story of many of our bi-vocational Credentialled Ministers and is a reality the movement has always lived with.**
- 1.4.4 Smaller churches may struggle financially to send delegates to both State and National Conferences. **These delegates like some of our bi-vocational pastors may need financial support to attend conferences.**
- 1.4.5 There is a possibility that some churches might frequently change their nominated delegates, making it difficult for individual delegates to attain the level of knowledge and experience ideal for voting rights. **Senior ministers should be involved in the necessary educational/acculturation process for their Elders, as well as delegate selection, to help ensure the best results for the Movement.**

2. PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL CHURCH ELDERSHIP BOARDS AND STATE EXECUTIVES

2.1 Affiliated Churches:

- 2.1.1 The delegate system recognises that our Charter and Constitution prescribes “that the CRC is a **fellowship of local churches and ministers**”. A local Church, as an entity in itself, will often be represented at National and State Councils by Nationally credentialled or other credentialled ministers but it is not uncommon for our smaller churches to have no representation.
- 2.1.2 For a local church to be eligible for a delegate it must fit within the definition of a local church as defined by the State Constitutions, or be a formally recognised outreach church that contributes to the CRC Levy system.

2.2 One Delegate per Church:

- 2.2.1 The delegate representation provides for each church to have, in addition to their credentialled ministers, one representative at both State and National Council meetings.
- 2.2.2 A Local Church Delegate will have full voting rights at our National and State Council meetings without being an official member of the National and State Council.
- 2.2.3 A Local Church Delegate should be a serving elder of the church, or a man or woman scripturally suited to eldership. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). If a local church is led by a Trainee, State or Affiliate credentialled minister, the Eldership Board may select him/her to be their delegate representative at the National and their respective State Council.

2.3 Appointment of Delegate:

- 2.3.1 A Delegate is to be endorsed by their Eldership Board, in an officially minuted eldership meeting, and recommended to the appropriate State Executive for approval. Approval would generally be automatic but the State Executive has the option of precluding/deferring someone if known impediments exist and delegates must have the continuing confidence of their State Executive.
- 2.3.2 Nomination of the Church Delegate is to be formally made using the official nomination forms.

- 2.3.3 There is an expectation that Delegates will attend State and National Council meetings and in selecting delegates, church elderships should recommend people that are willing and able to attend State and National Council meetings and fairly represent the church.

2.4. National Register:

- 2.4.1 Names of approved delegates are to be advised by the State Secretary to the National Office for inclusion in an official register of Church Delegates. Church Delegates will receive copies of National and State Executive minutes and CRC mail-outs.
- 2.4.2 Local church delegates cannot stand for National or State constitutionally elected official positions (i.e. Officers and Executives) as only Nationally credentialled ministers are eligible.

2.5. Cessation as Delegate:

Local Church Delegates will cease to be the official church representative if:

- 2.5.1 The Local Church Eldership, in an officially minuted eldership meeting, decide that it is no longer appropriate for the present incumbent to continue.
- 2.5.2 The Delegate resigns from this position through a formal letter to the Church Eldership. Where there is no eldership the letter of resignation is to be forwarded to the State Chairman.
- 2.5.3 The State Executive rescinds approval for the incumbent to act as the official church delegate. There is no appeal provision similar to that which applies to National and State Council members who hold either a National Ministers Credential or Ministers Credential.
- 2.5.4 Where a local church delegate ceases to represent a church a replacement delegate may be appointed by following the normal nomination procedures.

2.6. Voting Eligibility:

In order to be eligible to vote at State or National Council meetings, nomination for the office of a Local Church Delegate must be received by the State Secretary at least 90 days prior to the State or National Council meeting. Application for delegates received after this time will not be eligible to vote in a State or National Council meeting.

End Document

CRC Churches International Church Delegate Nomination Form

Action Steps

- Step 1** The Church Eldership formally meets and minutes a decision to appoint a local church delegates.
- Step 2.** Nominee fills in the “**Church Delegate Nominee Form**” and “**Personal Details Form**” and presents this to the Senior Pastor. (Where no Eldership Board exists and nomination is initiated at the request of the State Executive the form is to be forwarded to the State Chairman or his/her nominated representative).
- Step 3** Senior Pastor and one elder each complete the Second form - “**Questionnaire Form for Referee**”. (or where there is no Senior Pastor – two elders) (*Where there is no church eldership the State Executive is to appoint a pastor to interview the nominee and act as a referee.*)
- Step 4** Senior Pastor completes “**letter of Nomination**” certifying the Church Elderships decision to appoint the applicant as the church delegate. This can be downloaded from the CRC website Ministers Manual page as an editable Word document.
- Step 5** The completed forms:
- Church Delegate Nominee Form
 - Personal Details Form
 - 2 x Questionnaire Form for Referee
- are to be forwarded to State Secretaries under cover of a **formal letter of nomination**.

CRC Churches International Church delegate Nominee's Form

This Nomination is for Proposed Local Church Delegate

Section 1.

PERSONAL MATTERS

(PLEASE TYPE OR USE BLOCK LETTERS)

1. Surname _____ Christian Name/s _____

1a. Name of Spouse _____

2. Residential Address _____ Postcode _____

Postal Address _____ Post Code _____

Telephone No/s Home _____ Office _____

FAX _____ Mobile _____ Email: _____

3a. Date of Birth _____ 3b. Spouse's Date of Birth: _____

4. Place of Birth _____

5. Nationality _____

6. Are you a member of a CRC Churches International Church? _____

6a If so, which Local Church _____

Address _____ Postcode _____ Tel _____

6b How long have you been in this Church? _____

7. When were you saved _____

7a. In what Denomination or Church? _____

8. When was your spouse saved? _____

8a. In what Denomination or Church? _____

9. When did you receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4, 10:44-46; 19:6) and speak with tongues as the initial evidence? _____

9a. Where and with what denomination or Church? _____

10. When did your spouse receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues as the initial evidence? _____

10a. Where and with what denomination or Church? _____

11. When were you baptised in water by immersion? _____

11a. Date and place of water Baptism? _____

11b. When was your spouse baptised in water by immersion? _____

11c. Date and place of spouse's water Baptism? _____

12. Have you consistently followed Christ since your conversion? _____

12a. If not, please supply details: _____

13. Are you prompt in paying accounts/bills?

yes no

14. Do you have any physical weakness or emotional problems that would hinder you in an intense or pressured environment?

yes no (If yes, please attach explanation)

15. Have you ever been involved in a Church dissension?

yes no (If yes, please attach explanation)

16. Is your home/marriage conducive to success in the ministry?

yes no (If no, please attach explanation)

17. Please check (✓) the terms which best describe your day to day attitude to others:

<input type="checkbox"/> Warm-hearted	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical	<input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant	<input type="checkbox"/> Passive
<input type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Contemptuous	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic
<input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind	<input type="checkbox"/> Abrupt	<input type="checkbox"/> Patient
<input type="checkbox"/> Moody	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-centred	<input type="checkbox"/> Generous	

18. Please check (✓) the terms which best describe your attitudes and personality:

<input type="checkbox"/> Reliable	<input type="checkbox"/> Rigid	<input type="checkbox"/> Consecrated	<input type="checkbox"/> Lazy
<input type="checkbox"/> Apathetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncommitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Legalistic	<input type="checkbox"/> Carnal
<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak-willed	<input type="checkbox"/> Generous
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-motivated	<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual	<input type="checkbox"/> Extroverted	<input type="checkbox"/> Introverted
<input type="checkbox"/> Genuine	<input type="checkbox"/> Determined	<input type="checkbox"/> Procrastinates	<input type="checkbox"/> Careless

19. Do you get on well with others?

Very Well Satisfactorily Average
 Below average Very poorly

20. Does your spouse get on well with others?

Very well Satisfactorily Average
 Below Average Very Poorly

21. Do you have any personality traits which impair your relationship with others?

Yes No (If yes, please attach explanation)

22. Have you or your spouse suffered from, or presently dealing with :

- Any really serious marriage difficulties
- A drug dependency eg tobacco, alcohol, barbiturates etc.?
- A Gambling habit of any kind?
- An illegal drug problem?
- Involvement in a community disturbances?
- A criminal record?
- Any psychological or psychiatric therapy?
- A problem with pornography?
- A problem or had concerns raised with you about any form of child abuse?
- An inclination toward a same sex lifestyle?
- A reputation for involvement in behaviour indicating moral/ethical weaknesses?
- None of the above

(If yes, please attach details)

23. How do you rate yourself in the following areas?

Maturity - Personal development, ability to cope

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Motivation - Self discipline, sense of purpose, depth of commitment

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Reliability - Dependable, diligent, responsible

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Emotional Stability - Poise, mood stability, reaction to stress

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Judgement - ability to analyse problems

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Oral Expression - clarity, coherence

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Interpersonal Relations - Rapport, courtesy, manners, understanding

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Empathy - Sensitivity to needs of others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Work Habits - Stamina, conscientious, perseverance, resourceful, initiative

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Leadership - Creativity, curiosity, confidence, charisma, decisiveness

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Personal Appearance - Cleanliness, grooming, dress habits

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Integrity - Truthful, moral character, keep your word

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Academic Ability - Studious, making progress in personal education

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Reaction to Criticism - Able to handle negative and hurtful situations

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Preaching Ministry - Particularly in regular church service

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Co-operation - Teachable, attitude toward supervision, able to work with others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Sociable - Accepted by others, not withdrawn or anti-social

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Devotional Life - Prayer, spirituality

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Communications Skills - Share ideas effectively with others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Convictions - Commitment to beliefs

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Adaptability - Able to cope with changing situations

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Tolerance - Able to allow another point of view, patient with others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Tact - Think before speaking, able to keep confidence

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Modesty - in behaviour and dress

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Christian Experience - Consecration, growth in grace, Biblical knowledge

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Health

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average

Section 2.

MARITAL AND FAMILY PARTICULARS

1. Single/Married? _____

Christian Name/s of Spouse? _____

2. Have you ever been divorced? _____

2a. Has your spouse been divorced? _____

2b. If yes to question 2 and/or 2a, please give details _____

3. Have you and your spouse ever been separated since conversion? _____

3a. If yes, when and why? _____

3b. Is your spouse in harmony with this application? _____

4. Have you or your spouse ever fallen morally? _____
(If yes, please attach details)

5. How many children do you have? _____

5a. What are their names, ages and gender? _____

6. Are all members of your family going on with God? _____

7. Is your relationship with your spouse and children a good witness to others? _____

7a. Is your family in submission according to 1 Tim 3:4, 5, 7. _____

8. Do you or your spouse and children have any physical impairment/illness
psychological/emotional disorders/illness? _____

8a. If so, what is the nature of the problem? _____

9. Does your spouse relate well to other people? _____

10. How do your spouse and family view this nomination to a State Team?

Section 3.

GENERAL PARTICULARS

1. What is your present means of financial support? _____

2. Have you a trade or profession? What is it? _____

3. Are you in debt? _____

3a. If yes, to what extent? _____

4. Have you ever been a bankrupt? _____

5. What level of education have you had? _____

Primary _____

Secondary _____

Tertiary _____

Theological _____

6. Give specific details of relevant studies in theology and ministry

7. Are you a member of any organisation which may conflict with the CRC Churches International? _____

6a. If yes please specify. _____

Section 4.

MINISTERIAL PARTICULARS

1. What are your reasons for accepting this nomination with the CRC Churches International?

2. Outline your sense of calling to ministry?

3. Please state positions/roles you have held in your local Church:-

3a. Current position/role(s) _____

3b. Previous position/role(s) _____

4. Have you carefully read the Charter and the Constitution of the CRC Churches International? _____

4a. Do you endorse it? _____

4b. Will you abide by it? _____

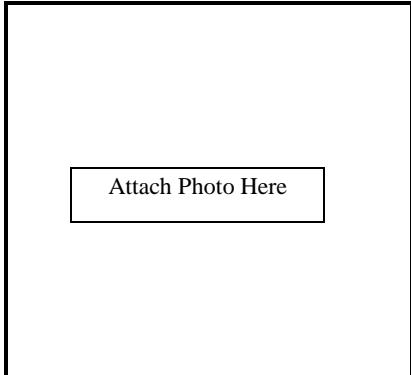
5. Have you any doctrines, beliefs or core values that conflict with the CRC Churches International teaching? _____

5a. If so, set forth your beliefs on a separate sheet.

6. Will you accept the oversight of the official brethren and abide by the decision of the Fellowship?

The information in this application, and the required attachments, will be used in the assessment of the application, and any future applications, and in the progress ministry development, or the defense of legal matters upon which the information may have relevance, by the State Executive or their delegates, and will be archived accordingly.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____



Attach Photo Here

Photograph with Spouse
(if applicable)

The completed form is to be lodged with the Church Eldership. Where there is no official Church Eldership this should be forwarded to the State Secretary.

Signature of Elder: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Minister: _____ **Date:** _____

(Where there is no credentialled minister another nominating credentialled minister's signature should be applied).

CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL
Church Delegate Referee
Questionnaire Form for Referee

Nominee's Name _____ **Nominated Position** Elder/Credentialed Minister
(Strike out a nomination)

Nominee's Pastor's Name _____

Your Name _____ **Phone** _____

How long have you known the applicant? years months

Please Check (✓)

1. How well do you know the applicant?

slightly casually well very well

2. Has your relationship been:

close casual distant intermittent

3. What has been the nature of your acquaintance? As:

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Minister	<input type="checkbox"/> Employer	<input type="checkbox"/> Minister	<input type="checkbox"/> Colleague
<input type="checkbox"/> Bible College Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Elder	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Co worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the family		<input type="checkbox"/> Personal friend	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

4. With what type of companions does he/she usually associate?

spiritual/of good character negative/of bad character

5. Is the applicant prompt in paying debts?

yes no don't know

6. Are you convinced that the applicant has a definite Born Again experience?

yes no unsure

7. The applicant's spiritual influence on others is:

positive negative neutral

8. Have you ever had occasion to question the applicant's moral attitudes or behaviour?

yes no (If yes, please attach explanation)

9. Have you noted physical weakness or emotional problems that would hinder the applicant in an intense or pressured environment?

yes no (if yes, please attach explanation)

10. Have you heard the applicant's preaching (personally or by tape)?

often occasionally never

11. Has the applicant ever been involved in a Church dissension?

yes no don't know

12. The applicant's family background is:

Christian Non-Christian don't know

13. Is the applicant a member of any secret or illegal society?

yes no don't know

14. Is the applicant's home/marriage conducive to success in the ministry?

yes no (If no, please attach explanation)

15. What is the applicant's local church standing?

Highly regarded Acceptable Below average Not accepted

16. How well does the applicant respond to responsibility given?

Irresponsible Seldom responsible
 Usually responsible Consistently responsible

17. Please check (✓) the terms which best describe the applicant's day to day attitude to others:

<input type="checkbox"/> Warm-hearted	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical	<input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant	<input type="checkbox"/> Passive
<input type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Contemptuous	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic
<input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind	<input type="checkbox"/> Abrupt	<input type="checkbox"/> Patient
<input type="checkbox"/> Moody	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-centred	<input type="checkbox"/> Generous	

18. Please check (✓) the terms which best describe the attitudes and personality traits of the applicant:

<input type="checkbox"/> Reliable	<input type="checkbox"/> Rigid	<input type="checkbox"/> Consecrated	<input type="checkbox"/> Lazy
<input type="checkbox"/> Apathetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncommitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Legalistic	<input type="checkbox"/> Carnal
<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak-willed	<input type="checkbox"/> Generous
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-motivated	<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual	<input type="checkbox"/> Extroverted	<input type="checkbox"/> Introverted
<input type="checkbox"/> Genuine	<input type="checkbox"/> Determined	<input type="checkbox"/> Procrastinates	<input type="checkbox"/> Careless

19. Does the applicant get on well with others?

Very well Satisfactorily Average
 Below Average Very Poorly

20. Does the applicants' spouse get on well with others?

Very well Satisfactorily Average
 Below Average Very Poorly Has no spouse

21. Does the applicant have any personality traits which impair his/her relationship with others?

yes no (If yes, please attach explanation)

22. Are you aware of any doctrines, teachings or practices held by the applicant which are at variance with the positions held by the CRC Churches International?

yes no unsure (If yes, please attach explanation)

23. From your knowledge of the applicant and spouses' general character, past record and present behaviour, tick (✓) any of the following which apply:

- has a drug dependency problem eg. tobacco, alcohol, barbiturates, amphetamines, painkillers
- uses illegal drugs or abuses any drugs legal or otherwise.
- has a gambling habit of any kind
- undergone (or currently undergoing) any psychological or psychiatric therapy?
- has a problem with pornography
- has, or had, a problem or had concerns raised to do with child abuse in any way
- has any inclination toward a same sex lifestyle
- has been involved in community disturbances
- has a criminal record
- has been divorced, remarried, or separated.

Please specify: _____

- has a reputation for involvement in behaviour indicating moral weaknesses
- has real serious marriage difficulties
- none of the above

(If yes to any please attach details)

24. What effectiveness has the applicant had so far in Christian service?

- very effective
- moderate effectiveness
- partial effectiveness
- not effective

25. Do you know of any disharmony between the applicant and spouse?

- yes no (If yes, please attach explanation)

26. Is there any concern of any kind of abuse or dysfunction in the applicant's marriage?

- yes no (If yes, please attach explanation)

27. How do you rate the applicant in the following areas?

Maturity – Personal development, ability to cope

- Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Motivation – Self discipline, sense of purpose, depth of commitment

- Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Reliability – Dependable, diligent, responsible

- Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Emotional Stability – Poise, mood stability, reaction to stress

- Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Judgement – ability to analyse problems

- Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Oral Expression – clarity, coherence

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Interpersonal Relations – Rapport, courtesy, manners, understanding

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Empathy – Sensitivity to needs of others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Work Habits – Stamina, conscientious, perseverance, resourceful, initiative

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Leadership – Creativity, curiosity, confidence, charisma, decisiveness

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Personal Appearance – Cleanliness, grooming, dress habits

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Integrity – Truthful, moral character, keeps his/her word

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Academic Ability – Studious, making progress in personal education

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Reaction to Criticism – Able to handle negative and hurtful situations

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Preaching Ministry – Particularly in regular church service

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Co-operation – Teachable, attitude toward supervision, able to work with others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Sociable – Accepted by others, not withdrawn or anti-social

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Devotional Life – Prayer, Spiritually

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Communication Skills – Shares ideas effectively with others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Convictions – Commitment to beliefs

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Adaptability – Able to cope with changing situations

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Tolerance – Able to allow another point of view, patient with others

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Tact – Thinks before speaking, able to keep confidence

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Modesty – in behaviour and dress

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Christian Experience – Consecration, growth in grace, Biblical knowledge

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

Health

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Not Observed

28. Do you believe the applicant fulfils a leadership role in the local church?

yes no not sure

29. The applicant's spouse's suitability for a leadership role in the local church:

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Unsuitable

30. Is there any additional information which you feel needs to be taken in consideration in respect of this applicant?

yes no (If yes, please attach a separate statement)

31. On the basis of the above, the applicant is:

Strongly recommended Recommended
 Recommended with reservations Not recommended

The information in this reference will be available to the relevant overseeing bodies of CRC Churches International for assessment and reference in the advent of any complaints and kept on file by the State Secretary.

Signature (of referee): _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Send this reference to the State Secretary

(*Date*)

To CRC State Secretary

APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL CHURCH DELEGATE

This letter confirms the (*name of governing board*)of : (*name of church*)

Met on: (*date*); and

Appointed: (*name of applicant*)

As the local church delegate for (*name of church*).

Enclosed are:

- Church Delegate Nominee Form
- Personal Details Form
- 2 x Questionnaire Form for Referee

Chairman of Church Eldership



PERSONAL DETAILS

LOCAL CHURCH DELEGATE

These are the details that appear in the CRC Pastors and Church Directory.

SURNAME:	
FIRST NAME:	
TITLE:	
CHURCH ELDER:	Yes/No
OCCUPATION:	
BIRTH DATE:	
SPOUSE FIRST NAME:	
SPOUSE TITLE:	
SPOUSE BIRTH DATE:	
WORK PHONE NO:	
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:	
SUBURB/TOWN:	
STATE:	
POSTCODE:	
RESIDENTIAL PHONE NO:	
PREFERRED E-MAIL ADDRESS:	
MAILING ADDRESS:	
SUBURB/TOWN:	
STATE:	
POSTCODE:	
MOBILE PHONE NO:	
SPOUSE MOBILE:	
MINISTRY CREDENTIAL HELD: <i>(If applicable)</i>	
DATE APPOINTED AS CHURCH DELEGATE:	
CHURCH:	
SENIOR MINISTER:	

Marriage Rites of the Christian Revival Crusade

***Proposed by Pastors Mike Cronin and Bill Vasilakis
Endorsed by the National Executive of the
Christian Revival Crusade - May 1997***

Christian Revival Crusade Marriage Rites:

"The Christian Revival Crusade understands that the Biblical model of a marriage relationship is to have one lifelong monogamous legally performed marriage between a man and a woman, in which there is constant love, continual care, mutual respect, Godly order, submission and sexual intimacy. In such a context, children may be born and raised in an atmosphere of loving care, training and discipline."

C.R.C. Ministry Guidelines - 1.1.6.

Therefore a C.R.C. wedding ceremony is to express this Biblical Christian model of marriage and should include specific prayers for the bridal couple to be enabled by God's grace to live according to this model.

The wedding vows will express before God a life time commitment to each other and may include the giving and receiving of rings to the bride and groom. This will be concluded with a declaration by the minister that the couple are now under God husband and wife.

The following examples of vows express the above requirements and are typical of those normally used.

Example 1:

*Sample Wedding Service provided by Pastor Barry and Vanessa Chant
updated February 2006*

WEDDING SERVICE

The minister welcomes the congregation and invites them to share in the service as much as possible. He then says—

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

MINISTER

We are gathered here in the sight of God and in the presence of this congregation to join together this man N1 and this woman N2 in holy marriage.

Marriage, the Scripture says, is to be held in honour among all. It was instituted by God himself, in the beginning, in Eden.

It was taken by the apostle Paul as the supreme illustration of the mystical union that is between Christ and his Church.

It was at a wedding that the Lord Jesus performed the first of his miraculous signs and thus revealed his glory.

Marriage was ordained—

For mutual companionship, friendship and comfort, that each should help the other in a way none else can do

For mutual pleasure and joy, that each should find in the other unique delight and enduring contentment

For the procreation of children and the establishment of a family in which they might be brought up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord

That through commitment and dedication to one another each should understand the true strength and resilience of love

Therefore, it should not be entered unadvisedly or lightly but prayerfully, reverently, discreetly and with careful thought, duly considering the purpose for which it was ordained by God. Into this holy relationship, these two persons N1 and N2 come now to be joined.

Note: The preceding statement is a brief summary of the essential teaching of the following Scripture passages: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-24; Psalm 127:1-5; Proverbs 5:18, 19; Matthew 19:3-12; John 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Ephesians 5:21-33. Ministers may prefer to express these thoughts in their own words.

PRAYER

WORSHIP IN SONG

Appropriate songs or hymns may now be sung as an act of worship to the Lord.

SCRIPTURE READING

An appropriate passage may be read here such as Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 45:10-17; Song 2:1-17; Hosea 2:16-23; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Ephesians 5:21-33

MESSAGE

The minister's address here should focus on the biblical teaching about marriage together with practical application to both the couple and the people.

WORSHIP in SONG OR ITEM

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

MINISTER

(asks the parents to stand)

Do you give your blessing to this union this day?

PARENTS

(standing)

We do

MINISTER

(to the congregation)

Will you support N1 and N2 in their commitment to each other and their lives together?

CONGREGATION

We will

MINISTER

(to the couple)

Do you believe that you have been called by God to join one another in this covenant of marriage, that your coming together is both an expression of His will and a fulfillment of his purpose and that together you can serve Him and please Him better than you could do alone?

BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE

We do

MINISTER

(to the bridegroom)

The Bible says, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one.’

Will you N1 have this woman N2 to be your wife
To live together by God’s command
In the holy state of marriage;
Will you love her, comfort her,
Honour, serve and protect her,
Worship and pray with her,
In sickness and in health,
And forsaking all others keep only to her
So long as you both shall live?

BRIDEGROOM

I will

MINISTER

(to the bride)

Will you N2 have this man N1 to be your husband
To live together by God’s command
In the holy state of marriage;
Will you submit to him and serve him,
Honour, love and comfort him,
Worship and pray with him,
In sickness and in health,
And forsaking all others keep only to him
So long as you both shall live?

BRIDE

I will

The bride and groom now join hands.

BRIDEGROOM

I N1 take you N2
According to God’s holy Word
To be my wife;
To have and to hold
From this day forward
And to share my faith in Christ with you,
For better for worse,
For richer for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To love and to cherish,
Until we are parted by death.
Before God, I pledge you my faithfulness.

BRIDE

I N2 take you N1
According to God's holy Word
To be my husband;
To have and to hold
From this day forward
And to share my faith in Christ with you,
For better for worse,
For richer for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To love and to cherish,
Until we are parted by death.
Before God, I pledge you my faithfulness.

MINISTER

As the husband is head of the wife
And as he imparts to her his name,
Receiving her into his care and providence,
N1 will place a ring
On the finger of his bride
As a token that he freely takes her
As his wife.

The bridegroom now places a ring on the bride's finger, saying—

BRIDEGROOM

With this ring I wed you now,
With this token I keep covenant with you,
With all that I have and all that I am, I honour you,
Through the love of God,
And the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

MINISTER

As the wife is one with the husband
And as she receives his name,
Entering into his care and providence,
N2 will place a ring
On the finger of her bridegroom
As a token that she freely takes him
As her husband

The bride now places a ring on the bridegroom's finger, saying—

BRIDE

With this ring I wed you now,
With this token I keep covenant with you,
With all that I have and all that I am, I honour you,
Through the love of God,
And the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

MINISTER

(To the bridegroom)

Thus you N1 are to shelter N2's life with strong protecting love

(To the bride)

Thus you N2 are to wear your ring
As the enclosing bond of reverence and loving trust

(To the couple)

Both together fulfilling the perfect circle
Of duty and love that makes you one in Jesus Christ.
May your love for one another,
Your devotion and your faith
Be unending like the circle of these rings,
Through every year that you shall live.

The bride and groom join right hands while the Minister says—

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

MINISTER

Those whom God has joined together, let not man set apart.
N1 and N2 have this day witnessed to their consent to live together in holy wedlock;
They have pledged their faithfulness to each other,
And have confirmed it by the giving and receiving of rings and by the joining of hands.
Therefore in the name of the Father, and of his Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
I declare them now to be husband and wife together. Amen.

The bride and groom may now kiss.

They then kneel and repeat the dedicatory prayer together, followed by the laying on of hands
and extemporaneous prayer and prophecy, as the Spirit leads, by the minister and by any
other invited participants.

DEDICATORY PRAYER

Together we yield our lives to you, O Lord;
Together we join in love for you, O Lord;
Together we rest our faith in you, O Lord.
Take our marriage, we pray,
And make it yours;
Take our love and joy
And fill them with yourself;
Take our fondest hopes and deepest dreams
And be their goal.
Use our home each day as your home;
Use our worldly goods as yours to command.
May our union only serve
To make our love for you far greater,
That in all things
Jesus Christ alone
May be supreme.
Amen.

WORSHIP IN SONG OR ITEM

During the worship in song or item, the register may be signed by the bridal couple and the two witnesses. The parents may also join the bridal party if desired.

CLOSING PRAYER

The minister prays—

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you N1 and you N2 with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Hebrews 13:20-21, ESV).

ADDITIONAL NOTE

This service has been prepared
to blend the dignity of tradition with the flexibility and spontaneity of Spirit-led worship
to include specific statements of commitment to Christ as well as commitment to each other
to offer a personalized approach

Therefore both the minister and the bridal couple should feel free to incorporate additional or alternative acts of worship, singing and so on as may seem appropriate to both them and the minister.

It is suggested the couple keep a copy of the service for themselves so they may recall their vows together from time to time, such as at each wedding anniversary.

Copyright © 2005 Barry and Vanessa Chant

Example 2:

Extract from Wedding Service by Pastor Mike Cronin, South Eastern Christian Centre Inc.

MINISTER:

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

FATHER:

(Standing) I do.

or PARENTS:

(Standing) We do.

The Bridegroom, having now officially received his Bride from her parents, father (or guardian) is addressed by the Minister.

MINISTER:

We come now to the commitment of the marriage vows where a man is joined to his wife that the two may become one.

Will you have this woman to be your wife, to live together by God's command in the holy state of marriage; Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, worship and pray with her, in sickness and in health? And forsaking all others keep only to her so long as you both shall live?

BRIDEGROOM:

I will.

MINISTER:

Will you have this man to be your husband, to live together by God's command in the holy state of marriage; Will you obey him and serve him, love, honour and comfort him, worship and pray with him, in sickness and in health? And forsaking all others, keep only to him so long as you both shall live?

BRIDE:

I will.

The Bride and Bridegroom now join right hands and the Groom repeats after the Minister.

BRIDEGROOM to BRIDE: (repeat after Minister)

....., please repeat after me:-

....., I love you and believe that God has brought us together, I receive you now as my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for richer, for poorer, in good times and in bad, to love and to cherish, to share my faith in Christ and to make my home with you; being always faithful to you, until death parts us. According to God's Holy Word, and in His presence I make this pledge to you.

BRIDE to BRIDEGROOM: (repeat after Minister)

....., please repeat after me:-

....., I love you too. I also believe that God has brought us together, I accept you now as my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for richer, for poorer, in good times and in bad, to love, cherish and obey, to share my faith in Christ and make my home with you; being always faithful to you, until death parts us. According to God's Holy Word, and in His presence I make this pledge to you.

MINISTER:

There is great significance in giving rings at a wedding. They represent an absolute and holy agreement. They are a reminder of what you have promised today before the Lord. Look upon your rings often and remember your vows. When we make a sacred pledge like this, it is good to have a reminder of that pledge. Notice the endless circle. It is a symbol of unbroken love and unity. The two of you, from this day forward, are to be one.

....., please place the ring on the finger of your Bride.

Bridegroom receives the ring from the Best Man and places it on the finger of his Bride.

BRIDEGROOM: (repeats after Minister)

With this ring I marry you All my life I share with you and by this act I declare before God and in the presence of these witnesses, that I take you to be my wife. I love you and will always be faithful to you.

..... would you now please place the ring on the finger of your Bridegroom.

BRIDE: (repeats after the Minister)

With this ring I join you in our promises and seal our vows. I declare before God and in the presence of these witnesses, that I receive you as my husband. I love you, and will always be faithful to you.

Bride and Groom again join their right hands while the Minister says:

PRONOUNCEMENT:

Since and have agreed to share their lives together, in the Holy Estate of Marriage, and have witnessed the same in the presence of God, and before us all, and have pledged their faithfulness to each other by making their vows and giving and receiving their rings; in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I pronounce that they are husband and wife.

Those who God has joined together, let no man set apart.

The Bride and Groom may kiss.

CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

CRC FAMILY MEMBER CHURCH GUIDE

PREFACE

The CRC Churches International (CRC) is a family of Churches co-operating together to produce ordained ministers and plant Churches throughout Australia and the world. In so doing, we participate in fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in the extending of the Kingdom of God in power globally.

This policy is intended for new Churches and other Churches seeking to join the family of CRC Churches International (CRC) in this Great Commission and being fully aware of what it means to be a member Church of the CRC. It is also an indispensable reference to member Church governing Oversight Boards in matters relating to our co-operation together and how things are done. In particular it is a great orientation tool for those considering going in to the ministry as a Credentialled Minister of the CRC and for those becoming Board of Oversight members as well as for other responsible positions in the local Church.

The policy gathers relevant information from other policies such as the Charter, National and State Constitutions etc., into one convenient place under key headings. Nevertheless it is important to obtain and be aware of our other policies available from our website crcChurches.org and relevant state pages or the respective state secretary.

Each Member Church of the CRC is interdependent with the CRC, through its corporate Membership, as described in the relevant state constitution and here in this guide. Each Church is required in Australia to be part of a legal incorporated entity. Given this, the rights and responsibilities and recourses of governance and membership are also covered under the relevant incorporations Act.

Overall the policy also describes in one place the general rites of the CRC and, where necessary, pointing to other policy areas, such as the credentialled Ministry Guidelines, that may contain other information or more detail that may be updated from time to time.

CONTENTS

(CTRL CLICK TO USE HYPERLINKS)

1. UNDERSTANDING THE CRC, ITS CHARTER

- **CRC BEGINNINGS**
- **CRC VISION, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**
- **CRC STATEMENT OF FAITH.**

2. CRC GOVERNANCE

- **HOW CRC IS ORGANISED**
- **HOW LOCAL CHURCHES ARE ORGANISED**

3. RESOURCES AND POLICIES OF THE CRC

4. BECOMING A CRC MEMBER CHURCH

5. CRC ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE IN A CRISIS

6. CRC MINISTERS PROVISIONS

- **TRAINING AND CREDENTIALING**
- **MINISTER ACCOUNTABILITY**

7. DISAFFILIATION FROM THE CRC PROVISIONS

- **INITIATED BY A CHURCH**
- **INITIATED BY CRC**

8. CRC CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROVISIONS

- **FOR CIRCUMSTANCES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE**

1.0 UNDERSTANDING THE CRC CHARTER OF CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

Introduction

Follows is what we call the Charter. It outlines in words our purposes and principles and is an excellent familiarization piece. It is available electronically from our website crcchurches.org, or from the National Office in an artistic booklet form; suitable for distribution to members and interested people.

The Charter mentions our Vision and Values which are outworked through our Strategic Directions presented in artistic booklets or pamphlets and posters in 5 year periods. These are also available for local use and display as you may wish. Variations of Strategic Directions are also available for the International endeavours of the CRC.

Charter

1. PREAMBLE

The CRC Churches International has been raised up by God as a fellowship of local Churches and ministers with a purposeful spiritual vision, mission, ministry and set of shared core values. These succinctly expressed statements reveal our deeply held beliefs and underpin and guide all of our various activities.

Our movement (previously known as the National Revival Crusade 1945-1952; Commonwealth Revival Crusade 1952-1963; and Christian Revival Crusade 1963-1998) began during World War II, offering hope to our Nation whose very existence was being threatened. It was birthed with a passion to reach lost people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to crusade for a national Christian revival with a unique Australian approach to ministry. In this Charter we state those convictions that give this Movement its distinctive and identifying features. The principles expressed in the Charter are the basis for affiliation with, and continuing fellowship in, CRC Churches International.

In the mid-1980s it was recognized that the CRC, which commenced in Australia and New Zealand in the 1940s, became an inter-connected International Movement with Papua New Guinea being its largest constituent member. In the 1990s CRC Churches International was operating in the Philippines, China, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Sri Lanka. With the continuing expansion of the CRC into numerous nations throughout the world, it is anticipated that other national CRC Movements will be invited to join this Association of CRC National Churches.

Comment Note(not found in the Charter): In the 21st Century the CRC in Australia and abroad is pursuing an international strategic goal to have a presence in every nation of the world during the first half and proceeding to acquire an organisational presence in every nation by the end of the century with significant penetration of every nation; as every Church focusses on winning souls, raising

ministries and planting Churches everywhere in the power of the New Testament pattern.

2. TRIBUTE TO FOUNDER

Recognition is given, and tribute is made, to Pastor Leo Cecil Harris, who through his unique abilities and apostolic ministry was used by God to establish and give leadership to this fellowship of Churches in 1945. He was recognised as President of the fellowship until his decease on the 24th September, 1977.

3. OUR VISION AND MISSION

3.1 Our vision is to help expand the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth by creating Bible-based contemporary local Churches and ministries (Acts 1:8).

3.2 Our mission is to exalt Jesus Christ in all that we think, say and do, and to extend His influence throughout the world by:

- Proclaiming Christ's Gospel with the expectation that supernatural signs will follow as the normal New Testament pattern (Mark 16:15-20);
- Planting Christ-centred Churches that are autonomous, interdependent and self-propagating (Acts 14:21-28);
- Promoting Christ-glorifying Christian communities which outwork the miraculous and character transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42-47);
- Producing Christ-following disciples who seek to obey the Great Commandment and Great Commission (Matthew 22:36-40; 28:18-20).

4. OUR CORE VALUES

4.1 WORD BASED

We believe that God will work through His living, authoritative and relevant Bible.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that all our theology, ministry practices and organisational policies and processes are Biblically based;
- Continually reforming ourselves, our local Churches and our movement by aligning ourselves to God's Word.

4.2 MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

We believe in the God-inspired multiplication strategy of covering the earth with Churches.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring our Churches are autonomous and interdependent for the purpose of reproducing new Churches;
- Continually releasing our people to outwork the Great Commission blueprint for New Testament revival as mandated by Jesus.

4.3 INTERDEPENDENT MINISTRIES

We believe in connected, cooperative and accountable ministers and Churches.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring our Church leadership teams avoid the extremes of both independence and dependence, through responsible and accountable practices;
- Continually looking to Jesus as the Head of the Church, to call and anoint the right men and women to lead the Churches of our movement.

4.4 NEW CREATION MESSAGE

We believe in the liberating power of the New Creation Message that secures and strengthens our foundations in Christ.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we teach “rest” in the finished work of Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection on our behalf, and in the reality of Christ in us through the person of the Holy Spirit;
- Continually enforcing our authority in Christ and appropriating all the privileges we now possess as members of God’s Family.

4.5 GOSPEL OF GRACE

We believe in a Gospel-centred and grace-pervading Christian message that must never be added to or changed.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we maintain our abiding conviction that Jesus Christ can save and transform anyone who places their full trust in Him;
- Continually embracing repentance and obedience as integral aspects of our response to God’s grace.

4.6 STABLE SPIRITUALITY

We believe in a balance between the ‘Word’ and the ‘Spirit’ as we express our dependence on Jesus Christ.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we equally value the Word of God and the Spirit of God as absolutely essential for the growth and stability of all believers, ministers and Churches;
- Continually assessing that works attributed to the Holy Spirit align with the inspired Word of God.

4.7 CONTEMPORARY MINISTRY

We believe that our Churches should be creative and culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we prayerfully and wisely adapt and change our worship modes, outreach methods and organisational processes;
- Continually monitoring that we maintain our Biblical beliefs and principles as we effectively relate to our constantly changing society.

4.8 HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

We believe in pursuing unity and walking in love in our Churches and amongst our ministers.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that integrity and right relationships are paramount, so we can experience the Godly power and spiritual synergy of dedicated teams;
- Continually working at love and unity, doing all in our power to strengthen and develop the ties that bind us together.

4.9 DYNAMIC FAITH

We believe in a forward-moving and daring faith that undergirds everything we do for Jesus Christ.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that we move in a faith realm that prays, believes and acts according to the Holy Spirit's confirmed leading;
- Continually affirming that faith is the means by which our potential authority in Christ is outworked in real spiritual power.

4.10 SELFLESS SERVICE

We believe in the call and cost of Christ-appointed ministers who willingly embrace sacrificial servant-hood as a way of life.

We show this value by:

- Ensuring that CRC Ministers know the depth of spiritual passion that comes from an authentic call of God;
- Continually encouraging people to value the cost of being a servant of Jesus, resisting the temptation to desire a crown without a cross.

5. OUR MINISTRY FOCUS

5.1. DYNAMIC CHURCHES

We will resource our Churches and their leadership teams to grow, be healthy and reach their God-given potential.

5.2. CHURCH PLANTING

We will align ourselves with Christ's master-plan for world evangelisation by Spirit-led Church planting.

5.3. MINISTRY TRAINING

We will provide Christian education for all age groups and work towards releasing the divinely bestowed ministry-gifts of Christ into full operation within the Church.

We will facilitate the identification of new ministers, invest in their training, entrust them with ministry opportunities and release them to fulfil their God-given call.

5.4. WORLD MISSIONS

We will embrace Jesus' Great Commission as our first priority, accepting the responsibility for developing a world missions vision in our Churches. We will support and engage in missionary enterprise in other lands with a view to establishing indigenous local Churches and ministry ventures.

5.5. YOUTH AND CHILDREN

We will impact the youngest of our generation for Jesus by inspiring and equipping our Churches to have spiritually effective ministries for children and youth.

5.6. EVANGELISM

We will propagate the message of the Word of God and engage in evangelism by all means, such as public meetings, the printed page and the mass media.

5.7. KINGDOM CITIZENS

We will encourage an attitude of Christian fellowship toward all believers in Christ and will honour all civil governing authorities according to the Scriptures.

5.8. FAMILY VALUES

We will uphold marriage as a life-long, monogamous, legally-performed marriage between a man and woman, in which there is constant love, continual care, mutual respect, Godly order, submission and sexual intimacy. We also uphold the family as the basic social unit of society.

6. THE CRC AND THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

We recognise that, within the framework of the Church Universal, there is the necessity to be associated with a group of Churches of common faith, values, vision, mission and leadership. The CRC is such a group and believes that association with it should not interfere with our love for, and fellowship with, the Church Universal in whatever contact we may have with it.

7. THE LOCAL CHURCH

We accept the New Testament portrayal of the Church Universal organised into **autonomous, interdependent** and **self-propagating** local Churches. Our concept of the local Church is that of a loving Christian community that is:

- 7.1. **Autonomous** i.e. self-governing having full authority to manage its own affairs and self-ministering, having sufficient ministry-gifts to lead its congregation according to the Ephesians 4:11-16 pattern;
- 7.2. **Interdependent** i.e. relationally connected, cooperative and accountable to the CRC family;
- 7.3. **Self-propagating** i.e. seeing itself as a base for outreach activities as expressed in the Vision and Mission of the CRC, conducted either on its own local initiative or in cooperation with other local Churches;
- 7.4. **Governed by Overseers** (or by whatever title the spiritual Oversight may be known) and served by Deacons or any other such Helpers; and
- 7.5. **Composed of people** who:
 - 7.5.1 Are saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;
 - 7.5.2 Are baptised in water by immersion;
 - 7.5.3 Ideally are baptised in the Holy Spirit;
 - 7.5.4 Are in submission to the ministry team and spiritual Oversight as they shepherd, disciple and lead the local Church; and
 - 7.5.5 Hold membership in no other local Church.

8. PRINCIPLES OF FELLOWSHIP:

- 8.1. We accept that fellowship finds expression on various levels of life and activity, such as fellowship between people and God; within a local Church; between local Churches in a group like the CRC; and with the Church Universal on both a personal and local Church level.
- 8.2. While recognising that fellowship will be the stronger and more intimate in the smaller and closer circles, we accept that fellowship in all of the above spheres (8.1) can be maintained without conflict of loyalties if a proper sense of priorities is held.
- 8.3. Fellowship is preserved only when privileges are counterbalanced by the following indispensable factors:
 - 8.3.1 Loyalty within our CRC fellowship and to its values, vision, mission and ministry is maintained;
 - 8.3.2 Contribution to our CRC fellowship is made from the resources of each of its members (*currently 3% of regular tithes and offerings*);
 - 8.3.3 The discipline of fellowship is accepted, each assuming the responsibilities and restrictions resulting from his/her loyalty to the CRC and its ideals.
- 8.4. We accept that the principles of fellowship are violated when any one member takes independent action knowing that it is contrary and harmful to the interests and desires of the fellowship as a whole, whether in their local Church, within our CRC family, or in the Church Universal.

In every case, liberty of action must be limited by consideration of the interests of others within the fellowship.

9. MINISTERIAL POLICY

The following policy is accepted as governing all ministry functioning in and for the CRC.

- 9.1. Only credentialed persons, or those endorsed by the National or State Executives, may officially represent the CRC.
- 9.2. It is expected of such persons that they give due respect to the Churches to which they are invited and at all times maintain the highest ideals of Christian fellowship and ministerial and financial ethics. A reciprocal policy by persons visiting CRC Churches is expected and appreciated.
- 9.3. CRC platforms are open to all ministers approved by the respective local Oversight, subject to the Principles of Fellowship set out in Clause 8.
- 9.4. While CRC Churches are encouraged to give generous financial assistance to visiting ministers, such ministers should be requested not to solicit funds, nor to seek names and addresses of members for follow-up purposes, without the approval of the local Oversight.
- 9.5. It is expected that visiting ministers will avoid presenting any doctrine, publicly or privately, to any member of a Church, knowing that it is contrary to what is normally taught in the Church concerned; or to distribute magazines or other literature, audio tapes, videos, cd's, dvd's etc., unless the approval of the recognised Oversight of the Church is obtained.

10. FINANCIAL ETHICS

- 10.1. Inasmuch as finance plays an important part in the activities of local Churches, we accept that the highest possible standard of ethics must be maintained in view of the following considerations:
 - 10.1.1 Responsibility to Jesus Christ as His stewards;
 - 10.1.2 Faithfulness to the people who have entrusted their offerings;
 - 10.1.3 A good testimony before the community as a whole;
- 10.2. In practically outworking this principle, and to ensure we are beyond reproach in this area, it is expected that:
 - 10.2.1 A proper accounting system shall be adopted as required by the civil authorities;
 - 10.2.2 the financial affairs of the local Church shall be managed by a responsible officer, or officers who are accountable to the senior

governmental authority of their local Church;

10.2.3 A balance sheet and a complete financial report shall be furnished each year to the members;

10.2.4 Books of account shall be duly audited each year by a non-member of the Church and presented to the members for their endorsement.

11. DECLARATION OF FAITH

The CRC believes in and presents the following basic truths:

- In the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- In God, the Creator, who has revealed Himself in the Persons of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit;
- In the Divinity and sinless Humanity of Jesus Christ, and in His miraculous ministry, His suffering and death on the Cross as the only Saviour for the sins of the world, and His resurrection from the dead;
- That Jesus will return to the earth as its final Judge of the living and the dead;
- That all people fall short of God's perfect standard and can only find forgiveness through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ;
- That all people who have put their faith in Jesus Christ will witness a transformation in their lives, exemplified by repentance and holiness of conduct;
- In Christian Baptism, by full immersion in water, of those who have personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ;
- In regularly celebrating the Lord's Supper, remembering Jesus Christ's saving work;
- In the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the normal initial evidence of speaking in unknown languages;
- In the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- That God heals the sick today through active faith in His grace;
- In the power of prayer;
- In God's community of believers, the Church and its responsibility to spread the message of the Gospel to all people and nations.

12. ALTERATIONS TO CHARTER

Alterations, additions to, or repeal of any of the provisions of this Charter shall be made:

12.1. By a two-thirds majority of members present; and

12.2. At a properly convened meeting with a four tenths quorum of the National Council of the CRC Churches International – Australia Inc; and

- 12.3. After sixty days written notice has been given to all those holding a National Minister's Credential, with details of proposed alterations, etc.

2. CRC GOVERNANCE RELATIONSHIPS

2.1 Governance Areas of the CRC

2.1.1 National Level Governance Relationships

In Australia we have a National Constitution the members of which are the National Credential holders known as the National Council. Each member local Church is also encouraged to have one delegate who is able to vote at National Council meetings representing the corporate member church. These Council Meetings occur at least once per year as part of a National Conference (usually in September or October) at which vision and policy items are confirmed.

The National Council elects a National Chairman (4 year term) and an Executive board (2 year terms) to manage the affairs of the Council, under policies approved by the National Council.

The National Chairman can also utilise an advisory team made up of past National Chairman in good standing; known as the Chairman's Commission.

The National Office, including positions such as the National Administrator and the Executive Secretary, support the National Chairman and Executive in the outworking of policy and governance of the Movement.

National portfolios such as Missions, Youth, Training, Credentialing, and each affiliate State Council/Executive, function under the National Constitution, and policy areas.

The National Executive and Council also take responsibility for the national goals and strategies. Since the Movement began in Australia, then, for the foreseeable future, the Australian Council is also responsible for initiating the international goals and strategies in consultation with the other affiliated nations.

The National Conferences mentioned earlier are expected to be attended by all ministers and delegates for professional development, participation in the strategic decisions being made, and fellowship with the growing family of ministers and delegates. Unless otherwise advertised, extended leadership teams and interested members are also welcome every year, and, in particular the whole family of the CRC is invited to attend in what we label "Global Conference". This includes children as well as youth.

2.1.2 State Level Governance Relationships

The States are structured very similarly to the national sphere with an elected State Chairman (2 year term) and Executive board (1 year terms). Similar portfolio holders exist, compared to the National Executive, under the State Constitution and relevant national & state policies.

The members under the State Constitution are the credentialed Ministers and National Ministers and, in addition, the corporate Member Churches. Again, the delegates represent their churches, and they, along with any entitled credentialed ministers, are eligible to vote at State Council gatherings which usually meet twice per year.

At the State level much of the responsibility involves the credentialing of ministers, the approval of delegates, and the approval of applications for Member Churches (Affiliation) and the administering of the covering policies. As churches are members of States, most assistance afforded individual churches is administered under the state or its delegated regions.

The State Conference (usually in April or May) provides for the in-service needs of our Churches that all ministers and delegates are expected to attend. The AGM usually takes place at these times also. Unless otherwise advertised, local Church members are also welcome. Other gatherings are facilitated for various purposes under each State according to its needs and frequently focus on a demographic (e.g. Youth).

2.1.3 Regional and Ministry Level Governance Relationships

Each State develops regions to foster care and co-operation. The Regional Leader is approved by the State Executive.

Where there is a region, Member Churches are expected to cooperate as part of a regional or relational network through their ministers, delegates and leaders. This fosters a healthy CRC family responsibility quite different to ordinary ministry relationship where relationships develop according to mutual interest and choice. Families can't choose their members; they can only choose to relate, and this is an indication of spiritual health that goes beyond convenience.

Therefore, whatever CRC Ministries are provided at the regional, State or National level, the local Church is strongly recommended to participate in them. Example ministries include Youth, Children, Training initiatives, and Organised Mission endeavours.

At the regional level, the main purpose of these more intimate gatherings is to relationally connect and administer mutual care, development and cooperation. It is also an ideal environment in which to nurture the development of ministry and church relationships by sharing in one another's Churches and co-operating on projects. By facilitating the sharing and co-operation of ministry in a region, the development of ministers of all kinds can be greatly accelerated. This would include new ministers as well as specialised ministers such as evangelists and also diverse ministries such as marriage ministry, or music ministry.

Furthermore, by cooperating together with other movements it will be possible to participate in significant initiatives to influence the region such as Crusades, Chaplaincy and Schools ministry, ministry to the poor, Christian media, Christian education, and Christian candidates for regional government.

2.1.4 Local Church Level Governance Relationships

Each CRC Church is expected to be organised in a generally prescribed manner under Incorporation, as provided in the relevant Act of their state or territory. Other business structures may be acceptable at the discretion of the CRC. A CRC 'Model Local Church Constitution' is provided for these purposes with principles important to the CRC, and interpretations that have passed the scrutiny of the Government for particular states or

territories are available through State Secretaries or in the document libraries on the CRC website (crcchurches.org).

Where a constitution does not closely follow the format of the CRC Model Local Church Constitution then the acceptance of it will be at the discretion of the CRC, or subject to the inclusion or modification of clauses to be harmonised as much as possible with CRC ideals.

Incorporations may be recognised for each relevant congregation, or several congregations may be organised under one incorporation. In fact, this is to be expected, until the Church is of a viable size to support scripturally and legally qualified Board of Oversight members, and otherwise provide a depth of healthy ministry and activity in a self-renewing and propagating fashion.

Each incorporation is financially autonomous. There is no central state ownership of a congregation's funds or assets. However, we have a Member Church levy of 3% of tithes and offerings that supports administration and initiatives at State and National level. There are also voluntary levels of contribution to initiatives and missions of the CRC.

2.1.5 International Level Governance Relationships

The CRC family is rapidly becoming involved in the nations of the world. Until there is a national body formed in a respective nation, the Churches or ministries therein are recognised through the sponsoring Church in an established nation by that nation as a CRC Member Church. Such a church will be an associate corporate member church of the respective State or Nation.

As the work progresses, the sponsoring nation may recognise individuals as field supporters. Where there are field supporters appointed, Australian Churches should keep the field supporters informed and be supportive of their missionary endeavours in that area.

As ministers are trained they may be ordained through their sponsoring Church's nation.

Once there are 5 established Churches with ordained ministers, the nation may organise itself and be recognised as a self-propagating CRC National body using the recommended articles for the purpose adapted to the local conditions.

The CRC fields and nations of the world send their leaders to the Australian National Conference of Australia each year; and from time to time there is a targeted 'Global Conference' airlifting a greater depth of international ministers. Following the conference there is a general gathering of the national leaders for prayer, fellowship, recognition of new field supporters, and national leaders, reporting, and the development of international policies and procedures.

Several times a year an Australian International Missions Team (AIMT) meets to work on strategic elements of our international endeavours. This team reports to the National Executive.

We have a CRC Missions Office which oversees the clearing of missions' funds, official CRC missionaries, and aspects of international leadership, field supporters and key ministries. The Board reports to the National Executive through our National Missions Director.

2.2 Governance Concepts of the CRC

2.2.1 Governance Standards

The general leadership model of the CRC is presbytery based. There is an executive leadership team that performs the Board of Oversight functions of the respective membership body. Each executive Board will have a leader.

We use various terminologies. At the local Church level the leader is usually referred to as Senior Leader, Senior Minister or Senior Pastor. In the CRC organisation the term Chairman is usually used at National and State level. In ministry areas, the term Director or Leader is usually used.

It is generally expected that the appointed leader be permitted to take initiative and cast vision and lead with the collaboration and support and input of the team.

In an executive team all are equally responsible but the role of a Board of Oversight member is different to that of the leader. While each member may also offer vision, the leader will usually have a right of veto except in matters pertaining to personal private interest. That is the leader must be able to take responsibility for every decision, while each Board member is responsible to express a vote and accept the outcome.

However, the Board collectively can veto the leader if a vote fails as recognised to the rules of the organisation. In practice a leader should be permitted to grow in faith and practice at the same time as that leader should provide a means by which each person on his team can also grow as large as they can in faith and practice through their own ministry area or portfolio.

The Board of Oversight team will meet from time to time to oversee and perform all its duties of governance. In the case of incorporated bodies, they will also meet annually and sometimes in special meetings with all the members and present reports on the outworking of the vision, use of finance and sometimes confirmation of leadership and other major matters as defined in the Act or the Constitution of the body. In this way the Board of Oversight is, in turn, accountable to its members. Furthermore, through an audit process and the lodgement of statutory reports, and spot audits the association is also accountable to the government.

As a Church or a collection of Churches grows, so will the responsibility. A Board of Oversight will need to begin to delegate out more and more of its functions while reserving for itself the right to veto any delegated decision or to intervene. This is accomplished through effective reporting systems. In this way the Board of Oversight is still expected to be responsible to oversee all the reports on critical functions of the assembly from the outworking of vision, values and goals, statement of faith, financial standards, Child Safe and OHS & W standards, policies, the function of justice and discipline, and other statutory requirements such as membership roll upkeep, meeting records and so on. A good governance checklist and a number of other resources are provided on the CRC website and are helpful to be aware that all responsibilities are being addressed.

Where a congregation is considered a campus of a governing Church, or a congregation of a diocese or parish, it may have a local team and may or may not have a Board position of its

own. Some arrangements may run with combined resources, and others may be set up as trusts with separate accounts and accounting. It is usually a matter of practicality and history how these situations came about.

The CRC may recognise each congregation regardless of its governance arrangements. Should problems develop with a congregation seeking to gain its autonomy from a governing church arrangement, then the State would be able to assist evaluating such a process if the parties are unable to do so for any reason. This would be covered in the natural justice clauses of the State Constitution in particular. These provisions are covered in more detail in another section.

2.2.2 Succession Planning and Leadership Development

The composition of any inaugural team will usually develop around the first leader. Subject to the rules or by-laws of the association or its team, the subsequent changes in composition of the team will usually progress in the following manner. A team member may resign subject to any undertakings, and likewise a leader. A team member's position is usually reviewed annually; they will normally acquiesce to a leader's request for them to retire by offering their resignation, or simply not standing again, depending on the practice.

When a succession has taken place, the new leader may want to reshape the team to achieve a better complementary make up in their eyes, or the working relationship may not be transferrable with some individuals. This possibility and any unusual expectations are ideally negotiated as part of the selection process. It should be realised that a new leader will often (but not always) have a different preference for their team and the team should be willing to adjust accordingly.

If any team members are unwilling to resign or retire, the team will usually support the wishes of the senior leader to release or replace a team member unless there is a good reason not to, because to do otherwise could create problems in the team. Some reasons why the team may want to retain an individual is that their skill is needed and not apparent in the proposed replacement or the replacement may be more unsuitable in some way. While this can be a sensitive matter, the provision of dialogue over a period of time and an understanding of the terms at the start should make this easier.

In the case of an existing leader that is perceived to be deficient in some way, and the Board finds itself at odds with the leader's aspirations for leadership changes, it is usually best to call in the next level of leadership. So a group may call in the department leader, and a department may call the Senior Minister, and likewise a Board may call in the State Chairman, and the State Executive may call on the National Chairman.

Generally the CRC encourages the development of leadership at every level, from the local Church to the National Executive, and the prayerful and careful transition of senior leadership in a generational manner. It is ideal that the right leader have sufficient time to make a significant contribution; possibly several terms. A term is 4 years at the National level, and 2 years at the State level, and usually indefinite at the local Church level.

In the case of our State and National Executives, our leaders are ideally already apostolic leaders in their own right who have been recommended by the respective executive. Nevertheless it is possible for another nomination(s) to be put forward from the respective Council. In this case it is possible to have a vote between two or more candidates instead of approval for a nominated successor. This freedom ensures the transparency of our leadership transitions in what is a diverse demographic. The succession and installation of the new leadership usually happens at Annual General Meetings of the relevant State or Territory, and at the National level.

At the local Church level, the governing Oversight Board should likewise maintain sufficient training and depth of ministry in the church so as to renew itself and have options for succession. The CRC provides suitable training for the members of churches so that those among these called to ministry may be activated, identified and qualified. The State and National gatherings (e.g. Conferences) are excellent environments in which to bring church members. Over time those that have a call to ministry will be activated by being in that environment.

If all else fails, the CRC may assist with the calling of a minister where there is no suitable local candidate. Likewise it is anticipated that each local Church will develop sufficient ministry people for its own needs as well as for starting new Churches and meeting these kinds of needs and opportunities in other places.

It is not the practice of the CRC to send ministers in a centrally organised manner. Local Churches must be active in producing ministry and calling for assistance as required. If the CRC is able to offer alternatives it will be at the discretion of the local governing Board of Oversight if the Church is otherwise in a viable position.

Likewise the local Church may research its own new senior minister. However, in the interview and decision process the Church is expected to consult closely with the State Chairman who will consult with the National Chairman. By definition it is often hard for a board to discern leadership qualities and spiritual dynamics they do not themselves have. Otherwise they may be the leader. However, the State and National Chairmen are seasoned leaders and well able to provide guidance. They can also draw on a common knowledge in the collegiate of ministers, concerning the candidate, which the Board does not have ready access to.

3.0 RESOURCES AND POLICIES OF THE CRC

In addition to the structural resources of the CRC mentioned in more detail elsewhere in this guide, the CRC has a number of resources available from the National Website <http://crcchurches.org/> and <http://crcchurches.org/crc-document-library/> to assist local Churches and States. Resources include:

- The Charter (see Section 1)
- National and State Executives, Councils with Constitutions
- Strategic Directions for Australia and the International scene in artistic format.
- Model Local Church Constitution and examples
- Logos and artwork and Corporate Membership affiliation certificates
- National and State Conventions, Conferences and in-service training.
- An annual National Report encompassing progress on Strategic Directions and statutory reporting.
- Repository of recent relevant State and National Records and Calendars
- Regional fellowships as well as ministry areas including those assisting with the training of children and youth workers and leaders in the local Church.
- A collegiate of Ministries available for local Church support
- Crisis support (see Section 5)
- Missions department and support structures and policies and finance clearance office
- Corporate missions projects to participate in
- Missions teams to join with, particularly for first experiences with teams
- Missions awareness resources.
- Missions Volunteer Workers cards for recognition of suitable lay people.
- Local Church CRC delegate guidelines and application kit
- Church and Minister Directories
- Training College and Pathways to Ministry Credentialing with Competency coaching kits.
- Credential Guidelines and Credential Application Procedures and Forms and Teams including coaching assistance and training where required within regional networks.
- Celebrant License maintenance with CRC rites for those with Credentials after Trainee.
- Minister identity card (with celebrant number if relevant) useful for hospitals etc.
- Ministers Manual incorporating relevant policies
- Ministry Guidelines & Women in Ministry Guidelines.
- Oversight Board of Elders Guidelines and Good Governance Checklist
- Church Planting Grants and Guidelines
- Church Planting School and support group.
- General guidelines for Privacy, Communications, Sexual Harassment, Salary, Divorce and Remarriage (especially in the ministry), Ministry Ethics, Duty of Care, OH &S
- Group Insurance where possible

- Dissemination of Critical Information such as the promotion of the need for a new senior minister
- Mailing list access to circulated corporately assessed critical information for local Churches such as new legislation and matters affecting incorporations including financial matters, taxation matters, employment matters, and religious freedoms et cetera.

4.0 BECOMING A CRC MEMBER CHURCH OF CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

Introduction

In simple terms a congregation is a Church for the purpose of this matter regardless of its governance structure. A Church will become a Member Church of the CRC by being accepted on to the directory of the CRC. It is achieved by downloading and filling in the current relevant application form to do so, and lodging it with the relevant State Executive as per the details on the application. Upon acceptance of the application the Church will be a Member Church and included in the directory.

Generally, Churches present with one of either two histories; either they have been planted under the covering of a CRC mother Church (known as the Governing Church) or not. In the first instance they may or may not yet have their own incorporation.

In the case of being planted by a mother Church and under the mother Church constitution the Church is legally a department, campus, congregation or trust of the mother Church. In all cases, for the purpose of the CRC, this congregation may be registered as a Church and listed on the CRC directory by filling in the Member Church application.

In the case of Churches that are either independent constitutionally, or transitioning from some other movement, then for practical purposes it is important to note that the Church will need to present with a viable Board of Elders/Oversight, a viable membership size, and a suitable constitution. However, we provide Governing Church arrangements to partner such churches with stronger churches to be collectively viable. These matters will be presented in more detail in Section 4.3.

So for the purpose of this guide, a CRC Member Church is a Church congregation that may have its own constitution and Board, or have its own constitution with all or part of its Board being that of a governing Church, or have a shared constitution and Board of a Governing Church.

4.1. General Undertakings of Member Churches

Becoming a Member Church is an important contract, so the general principles involved in becoming (and being) a Member Church need to be pointed out as follows.

- Each Member Church undertakes to uphold the relevant State Constitution in force from time to time which includes upholding relevant State Policies in force from time to time, and
- Upholding the Charter and National Constitutions in relevant areas. This includes upholding National Policies which in turn includes, embracing the broad vision and values and statement of faith of the CRC.
- The CRC also presents International and National Strategic Directions initiatives from time to time. Member churches are encouraged to both participate in the development

of these strategies through their minister and/or delegates, and to outwork these strategies in their own local context.

4.2. Interdependence

Local Churches and the wider CRC in a State or Nation are mutually interdependent by what they undertake to give and receive in the way of co-operation in resources and services.

4.2.1 The CRC undertakes to serve its Member Churches by:

- Providing crcchurches.org website information centre, document library, events co-ordination, links to your Website(s) and so on,
- Providing a directory of Churches and ministers for connection purposes,
- Providing State and National based ministries to assist States, regions and Churches in the supplied ministry areas,
- Providing cooperative goals, strategies, infrastructure, facilitation and policies for home and overseas missions which Member Churches are able to participate in,
- Providing a training path for prospective leaders and Ministers in Member Churches,
- Providing for the ordination of Ministers in CRC Member Churches and their Outreaches, described in great detail in the Ministry Guidelines Policy and the relevant State and National Constitution,
- Providing the registration of Celebrant Licenses for CRC Ministers,
- Providing coaching and mentoring for the continued progression of Ministers through levels of ordination from Trainee to State Minister. For Ministers who are leaders of their Church or minister significantly beyond the sphere of their Local Member Church progression to a National Ministers Credential is indicative,
- Providing State and National Conferences for the in-service training of CRC Ministers and leaders in Churches. In addition some conferences are designed for the inspiration, encouragement and equipping of congregants. Likewise special State and National events are provided for various demographics from time to time,
- Provision of policies for minimum standards of behaviour for CRC ordained ministers for the protection of the ministers, their congregants, the public, our fellow ministers and Churches, and the reputation of the CRC and the Body of Christ at large. These standards are contained in our CRC Ministerial Ethics Policy and the CRC Duty of Care Guidelines,
- Provision of processes to outwork discipline and restoration for CRC ordained ministers. These are described elsewhere in this policy and in our Discipline and Restoration of Ministers Guidelines as well as in the relevant sections of the State and National Constitutions,
- Provision of justice mechanisms to assist local Church Boards of Oversight and their members,
- Providing and managing the minimum standards for Churches registering with CRC protects the reputation and dignity of each existing CRC Member Church as well as the Body of Christ at large,
- Providing general minimum standard resource policies to outwork State and Federal laws, and the expectation of insurance providers,
- Providing group insurance coverage, and

- Providing regional and relational fellowship networks for mutual support, friendship, ministry exchange, strategy and co-operation of local Churches to reach their region.

4.2.2 The Local Church Undertakes to contribute as a Member Church by:

- Providing local ministry to reach their area with the Great Commission on behalf of the greater CRC,
- Assisting the CRC in home and overseas mission initiatives such as fundraising and sending individuals and teams to established fields,
- Contributing to CRC global mission by taking initiative to adopt and visit nations with a view to aid, ministry and Church planting where ever possible and communicate and offer details from time to time,
- Intentionally developing any potential leaders and ministers using CRC resources and other resources with a view to putting forward suitable ministry candidates for the renewal of the local Church and outreach in home and overseas mission resulting in multiplication of Churches,
- Providing a Church Delegate, via the appropriate application form from the CRC website or State Secretary, to represent the Church at Council Meetings and receive copies of correspondence for appropriate use and dissemination,
- Networking to a local or relational group of CRC Churches and Ministers to edify and be edified, hosting and being hosted, for various events for ministers, training days, special combined events, and supplying team members where applicable,
- Facilitating and influencing the participation of Ministers and Delegates in State and National Council Meetings and conferences for participation, professional development, connection and resourcing. Ideally all are expected to attend, however even in a small Church at least one delegate or minister is expected to attend,
- Remaining current on CRC levies as per the Church Membership Application form and as varied from time to time thereafter,
- Participating in the calls for contributions to the development of State, National and International strategic direction reviews to develop goals as well as policy development; and ultimately to ensure that ministers and delegates are present to vote on the final adoption of the developed documents,
- Influencing Ministers to be submissive to codes of conduct and co-operate with processes and discipline procedures and provisions to preserve the minimum standard of our ministerial ethics across the CRC, and
- Participating in the health and well-being of the CRC by responding to assistance given to the Church in times of crisis within our processes provided in the constitutions and policies in force at the time. Resistance to the process developed out of experience is only a further waste of resources.

4.3. Indicators of a prospective Member Church

A Church that is presenting with its own Board and constitution will have the following indicators.

4.3.1. Membership Viability

Membership comprises, in a city Church, a minimum of 75 regular adult attendees (of whom 40 are Members or the equivalent designation) and, in a country Church, shall have a minimum 50 regular adult attendees (of whom 30 are Members or the equivalent designation).

This ensures that the Church has sufficient depth of Membership to be likely to be able to sustain a progressive responsible Board and reproduce ministers and be able to conduct healthy Members meetings.

4.3.2. Board of Elders/Oversight Viability

Members of the Board should have the proven Christian character, spirituality and governance competencies. They must also have the moral and scriptural qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 to be appointed as Board Members (these may also be known as Elders).

The Board shall consist of a minimum of three persons and ideally increase to 5,7,9 etc. (odd numbers) as the Church grows to ensure that simple majority decisions can be made at all times. In the event that the Board becomes unviable and is unable to maintain three Members, refer to clause 25 (Governing Church Provisions).

In situations when the Church has viable Membership strength but is unable to maintain a three Member Board, the remaining Board Members can appoint a Nationally Credentialed CRC Pastor(s) with the endorsement of the State Chairman to fill an interim casual vacancy (up to 12 months). In the event that the Board is unable to maintain 3 Members beyond 12 months, refer to clause 25 (Governing Church Provisions).

4.3.3 Constitution

The local Church constitution needs to be in harmony with the CRC. Whether operating as a separately constituted body or as a department of another Church, the Governing articles need to be registered under the relevant Act.

A recommended Model Local Church Constitution is available from the CRC website or through the State Secretary along with examples that have succeeded in registration under the local Act. One of these constitutions may be adopted as is with local adaptations, and special features of the local scene. However, an existing constitution can be proposed to be altered to align with the recommended constitution, although this is a much more arduous process. In both cases the notes to the recommended constitution highlight those clauses which are particularly essential to being a CRC Member Church.

All proposed changes to this Constitution shall be approved by the Board, and then endorsed by the CRC State Executive or their nominees to verify that the proposed changes are

consistent with the stated vision, values, ethos and operational procedures of the Church and the CRC. The constitution should then be presented to the local membership at a properly convened meeting for the purpose.

4.3 Key Specific Undertakings of Member Churches and the CRC

Member Churches and the CRC undertake to uphold and abide by all policies as generally described in 3.1. and specifically to do so as follows.

4.3.1 Vision

Member Churches undertake to be aligned in the CRC vision to win souls from the community, disciple and build the ministries of the local Church, and train and release CRC ministers for renewal of the local Church, and the CRC in Church planting and ministry in home and overseas mission. The CRC undertakes to ensure that the Member Churches have input into the strategic directions of the Movement and that these are approved by the Ministers and Delegates of the Member Churches in Council.

3.3.2 Attendance.

Member Churches undertake to be represented by their delegate and as many ministers as possible at each State and National function for its purpose and the CRC undertakes to ensure such gatherings are needed and contain value. From time to time the gatherings are advertised for local leaders and members also and the church is expected to utilise the promotions and encourage their members to make use of these opportunities.

4.2.3 Constitutional Changes.

Member Churches undertake to work well in advance to only present motions for changes to their constitution by their Members that have been pre-approved by the State Executive, and the CRC undertakes to only be prescriptive about the clarity and intent of the clauses as it may relate to consistency with existing approved CRC policies or relevant laws and Acts.

4.2.4 Procedures.

Member Churches undertake to follow CRC procedures when the CRC is required by policies to render assistance to the Church in any way as described, and in cases where the Board or the Senior Minister is in difficulty (see 5.0. below for more detail), and the CRC undertakes to respond where it is able to and to do so with as much dialogue as possible with all stakeholders and in as collaborative and conciliatory manner as possible.

4.2.5 Conflict Resolution.

Member Churches and the CRC undertake, in the event of any conflict as to any CRC involvement, to follow the natural justice provisions which are modelled on Matthew chapter 18 (as described in more detail below in 4.6).

4.2.6 Property Divestment.

Member Churches undertake in the event of the intended divestment of non-current property to consult with the State Chairman with a view to confirm that the capital will be

constitutionally preserved such as in the purchase of additional property and that any ethics such as inherent trusts are adequately addressed. The CRC undertakes to immediately approve any divestment when it is clear that the capital is likely to be preserved and there are no known ethical trust issues to resolve such as a large donation to buy the asset on the basis that the land is not sold in the future.

4.2.7 Change of Senior Minister.

Member Churches undertake, in the event of a change of Minister, to consult with the State Chairman before a final decision is made in case that there is relevant critical information to the decision that is on hand that the Church may not be aware of, or that in certain cases such as a Minister coming from another movement, certain inquiries of due diligence may be required by all concerned. The CRC undertakes to take a consultative role unless there is any matter of ministerial discipline or notice of concern from previous movements or ministry engagements. In any succession a Memorandum Of Understanding should be developed between the incumbent and or the Oversight Board and the successor covering many key areas such as vision, pay and conditions, financial position, changing roles of staff, ongoing circumstances of fellowship, leadership and pay and conditions of the incumbent and any of their family. The CRC may be a resource for recent such MOUs.

4.2.8. Winding Up.

Member Churches undertake in the event of winding up the Church to realise that this will ordinarily take place under the supervision of a Governing Church. While sundry assets may be distributed to Churches that can utilise them or store them, the property of the Church subject to any trusts will be transferred to the State who will then supervise its transfer to a CRC Generations Fund. These funds are a perpetual trust that ensures that the legacy and sacrifice of the givers will continue to serve the extension of the Kingdom of God through the CRC in all places whether locally, in the State, in Australia and around the world. The CRC undertakes to do everything it can to exhaust the notion that the Church could realistically be brought to health again through CRC assistance provisions (section 5) and in the event that this is not possible that the giving of past generations is not wasted or stolen but rather invested for future generations.

4.2.9. Disaffiliation.

Member Churches undertake to be involved, and be a contributor in relationship to the CRC, and, if for some reason, after every effort to be heard and responded to, the Church wishes to depart from the CRC, then it undertakes to follow the disaffiliation provisions as outlined below (Section 7). The CRC undertakes to assist and support Churches and ministers in any way possible to be healthy and valued participants regionally, in the State, Nationally and Internationally, according to their gifts and character development, and to not disaffiliate Churches, or terminate credentials, without just cause according to CRC policy, and then by approved processes.

4.2.10 Governing Churches.

Churches undertake to be responsible to their Members and the investment of the past by seeking the covering of a Governing Church when there is a need according to CRC Polices.

This shall be in consultation with the State Chairman (who will consult with the State Executive and the National Chairman). It may also be in response to the State Executive's assistance in brokering a Governing Church to provide all or part of Board.

Governing Churches undertake to assist the Church back to strength and autonomy. In the event that the Governing Church and or the Adopted Church wish to set aside the Adopted Church constitution and amalgamate with the Governing Church (or the adopted church is to be wound up into the Governing Church) then the State Chairman shall be consulted (who will consult with the State Executive and the National Chairman), and assistance provided to guide the Churches through a process of consultation, development of a Memorandum Of Understanding and a formal Membership vote at which the State Chairman (or their nominee) be invited to address the meeting before the vote is taken whether for, against, or otherwise, concerning the amalgamation or windup proposal.

4.2.11 Attaining Autonomy.

If a principle leader of a daughter or adopted Church without a constitution, or long established under a Governing Church, should wish to become autonomous, then the Church leader should consult with the existing Governing Board and the State Chairman or his nominee. If there is any contention in the proposal then the general justice clauses of the existing constitution and this policy and State Constitution should be considered.

Ideally the proposed autonomy should at least be based on having a committed credentialed Minister, Membership strength and a proposed suitable Board, and a proposed suitable constitution.

If the Governing Church or the State Executive should decide to proceed with a Membership vote then a meeting of the proposed autonomous Church subset of the Members should be called to consider the proposal. At this meeting both the Senior Minister and the State Chairman (or their nominees) should be invited to address the meeting whether for, against, or otherwise concerning the proposal and this proposal should also include the proposed constitution, and Board, and plan to transfer Membership and any assets to the new constitution. The quorum and majority required shall be that for constitutional change applied to those who are Members and of the campus.

5.0 CRC ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE IN A CRISIS

5.1. If there are accusations against the Senior Minister

In consultation with the State Chairman (who will consult with the National Chairman) the Board may act to stand the Senior Minister aside according to the Local Constitution processes and call on the State Executive to assist with the situation.

If the Senior Minister refuses to submit to the Local Constitution then the Board may request the CRC to assist, and if after due diligence it is considered the Senior Minister should stand down and he refuses to do so his credential may be suspended where he is required to relinquish all positions automatically pending an investigation according to the CRC Credential Suspension provisions (Section 6.2.1).

5.2. If the senior Minister is incapacitated

In consultation with the State Chairman (who will consult with National Chairman) any Deputy Leader or else any appointed Executive Leadership Committee for this purpose shall become the acting Senior Minister upon the Senior Minister's decease, their voluntary resignation, incapacity or removal.

In the case of termination of the Senior Minister's appointment, the Board will consult with the CRC State and National Chairman about the removal of the Senior Minister prior to the appointment being terminated.

The Board shall then proceed by a two-thirds majority decision to make a permanent appointment of a Senior Minister for the Church as soon as practicable subject to seeking advice from the CRC State Chairman who will consult with the National Chairman. The permanent leadership appointment does not necessarily have to be chosen from among the Board Members.

Should the Senior Minister and Deputy Leader or Executive Leadership Committee by reason of death, accident be rendered incapable of carrying out their leadership responsibilities, or there was no provision prior appointment of a Deputy or a Committee, the Board if necessary shall, subject to consultation with the CRC State Chairman or his nominee, meet as soon as practicable to appoint an 'Acting Leader' from among their own Members by a two-thirds majority decision, whose only duty will be to ensure the church functions as normal.

5.3. If there is an unresolvable Board dispute

In the event of circumstances not envisaged by the constitution, or in the event of a dispute or breakdown of relationships amongst the Board, which the Members are unable to resolve by a simple majority decision, the matter is to be referred to the State Chairman of the CRC. The State Chairman may handle this matter in consultation with the National Chairman, or may appoint a Panel of three experienced Nationally credentialed CRC Pastors for mediation, resolution and a decision, or arbitration. In the event that unresolved matters are

protracted the State Executive may appoint a governing Church to ensure the Church has a stable Board.

5.4. If the Board is the subject of a justice dispute

The State Executive or its representative(s) may investigate and mediate if possible and then arbitrate if necessary with due regard to the principles in the PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES policy.

5.5. If there is an unresolved dispute between Churches

Disputes between Affiliated Churches shall be settled, if possible, between the Churches concerned. If this fails then an impartial mediator acceptable to both parties may be called upon to help resolve the dispute. In the absence of agreement to choose a mediator the State Executive shall appoint a mediator

If the Churches involved fail to resolve the dispute by mediation, then the matter shall be discussed with the State Executive or its representatives, and the procedure for settling disputes in Appendix 1 of this Constitution PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES shall be followed

5.6. If there is an unresolved dispute between the Church and the State Executive

Disputes between an affiliated Church and the State Executive/Council shall be settled, if possible, between the parties concerned. If this fails then an impartial mediator acceptable to both parties may be called upon to help resolve the dispute. In the absence of agreement to choose a mediator the National Executive shall be requested to appoint a mediator.

If the parties involved fail to resolve the dispute by mediation, then the matter shall be discussed with the National Executive or its representatives, and the procedure for settling disputes in state PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES shall be followed, excepting that where the State Executive/Council is one of the parties involved in the dispute the National Executive or its representatives, except for representatives in the dispute, shall replace the State Executive in the process of resolving the conflict

5.7. If the Church is not viable

A Church becomes viable when it has a CRC pastor and the numerical and financial strength to maintain an Oversight of scriptural standards, and support the ministry at least part time and with sufficient leadership depth to function as a worshipping congregation with sufficient overlap. Chiefly, these are deemed likely if the Church has around 75 attendees for a city Church and around 50 attendees for a country Church.

Prior to this, a Church will usually be an outreach or campus Church of a sending Church; which is the Governing Church. In the case of an established Church it may therefore become an adopted Church again if its Membership falls to below the above guidelines.

If an adopted Church has a constitution, either the Senior Minister of the Governing Church will join the Board of the adopted Church, at one end of the spectrum; or, at the other, the

Board of the governing Church will become the Board of the adopted Church. It all depends on what seems to be the need at the time that can be brokered between the two Churches.

In some cases the Churches may decide to be permanently connected as one Church in different locations under one constitution. In this case the Senior Minister of the Governing Church will discuss the matter with the State Chairman who will confer with the State Executive and the National Chairman. If they, upon making any inquiries they wish, are satisfied that the amalgamation, or the winding up of one in to the other, is in the best interest of any adopted Church and the CRC, then the matter may proceed formally in that direction.

Both parties should make full disclosure to each other on any and all matters of finance (whether income and expenditure will be pooled or run separately), leadership arrangements, staffing arrangements, and on-going ministry expectations and so on. A Memorandum Of Understanding setting forward such things and the steps forward should be floated to the two Churches. Examples should be sought of most recent amalgamation MOUs.

If the Board(s) of Oversight are in agreement then involvement of the greater leadership and Members should proceed with dissemination of the MOU and or relevant information ahead of a Members meeting to pass the requisite motions for the amalgamation.

The requisite forms should be lodged with Department of Justice (or the equivalent state body) upon a successful amalgamation.

5.8. If a Church Campus should seek autonomy.

(See also 4.2.11) In the event that the Church Board is not favourable to a Church becoming autonomous, and the matter is contentious, then the proposed leader or the Senior Minister should consult with the State Chairman who will consult with the National Chairman and State Executive to assess the merit of the proposal which will include the aspects of viability, leadership, credentialing and proposed constitution.

The State Chairman (or their nominees) shall make whatever inquiries they so decide to come to an opinion of the merit of the move toward autonomy. In accordance with the justice clauses of the State Constitution the State Executive may in the absence of a negotiated agreement recommend or otherwise proceeding to a vote of the Members involved and assist with memorandum of understanding of what is proposed incorporating the relevant other considerations mentioned in clause 4.2.11.

At such a meeting the Senior Minister and the State Chairman (or their nominees) should be invited to speak to the motion whether for, against or otherwise. The motion should include a proposed Board, other key leadership position, constitution, and the setting out key dates in the plan. The quorum and majority required shall be that for constitutional change applied to those who are Members and of the campus.

6.0. CRC MINISTERS PROVISIONS

6.1 TRAINING AND CREDENTIALING

The ministry training pathways of the CRC can be accessed through the National Training website at crctraining.com. The courses are accredited and can attract student assistance and FEE HELP. Courses could lead to a Credentialled Ministry pathway.

In this case, a student will be appointed a coach from among CRC Ministers and National Ministers who are coaches. The coach will ensure the student becomes competent in a list of key competencies covering CRC matters, ministry matters, personal matters and theological matters.

This course may be done in a class situation when and where there are centres for that purpose. A local Church with a qualified coach may set up such a centre. Alternatively the course may be undertaken through the online provisions available.

The successful student will apply for a Trainee Ministers Credential and submit the competency work. If the candidate is not a novice and can demonstrate extensive studies it may be possible to be granted a credential with minimal additional training by submitting the competency work and filling in a cross mapping section in the application form covering the study areas.

The candidate will be interviewed by the State Credentialing Team and if recommended will be decided upon by the State Executive and, if successful, will be ordained at the next State Council meeting or at a State or National Conference.

Continued study and completion of State Minister Competencies will make it possible to become a Minister with a celebrant license.

Ministers exerting a ministry influence beyond their locality may be invited to become competent as a National Minister which if successful would ultimately be issued by the National Council.

In the case of those who hold a credential in another movement, they will become competent in some CRC matters and submit that work and be considered for an Affiliate Ministers Credential for a transition period.

6.2 MINISTER ACCOUNTABILITY

CRC Churches have ministers ordained by the CRC. It is very difficult for Churches to have leaders other than those the CRC recognises. It is therefore crucial to the health and safety of local Member Churches that their ministers are accountable to a collegiate of ministers that can, in a practical way, fulfil the ideal of the Body of Christ at Ephesians 4 ministry level. In our case this is the CRC family of ministers and Churches.

Ideally matters in view would be resolved as quickly as possible without the need for cancelling of Credentials where it is neither serious nor urgent and there is a submissive attitude. In such cases, and even where a serious process is undergone, but the Minister

consents to a redemptive process, the CRC has a policy for Discipline and Restoration of Ministers. However occasionally that is not the case and the following provisions are required.

We have two provisions. The first is a suspension provision which has more of an impression of the matter being serious but requiring clarification and either a reinstatement or proceeding to forfeiture.

However, in both situations a final decision has not yet been made, in the first instance, and in both situations the minister involved may make submissions and make appeal as follows.

6.2.1. Credential Suspension Provisions excerpted from a State Constitution

A State Excerpt.

Follows is an example only (as provision may vary slightly from state to territory) of the suspension provisions that ministers are vowed to. Suspension is likely to be a first step if the CRC feels there is a case to answer. It ensures that the CRC is able to protect a Church and the wider CRC and body of Christ and the public from a Minister who seems to have fallen in some way. This protection involves the fact that a Minister is avowed to stand down from all positions in the Church and the CRC while an investigation takes place.

- 11.1 Should the State Executive determine that a recognized Minister or Leader of a Church has violated the basic requirements of Scripture, the Charter, National Constitution or this Constitution in the areas of the use of finance, ministerial ethics, personal morality or doctrine then that Minister or Leader shall be required to:
 - (a) Surrender his or her Credential immediately;
 - (ii) Resign from the leadership of their Local Church immediately;
 - (iii) Resign from any position of leadership or ministry in CRC Churches International; and then
 - (d) Accept a reasonable period of restoration and rehabilitation as may be prescribed by the State/National Executive. *"Guidelines for Discipline and Restoration of Ministers"* are found in the Minister's Manual of the CRC Churches International.
- 11.2 The procedure for the State Executive to follow in making such determination and the right of the Minister concerned to appeal against the determination, and the establishment of a Board of Appeal, are outlined in Appendix 1-II PROCEDURE FOR FORFEITURE OF CREDENTIALS clause 2 of this Constitution.
- 11.3 The State Chairman together with the National Chairman shall have the power to suspend a Minister's Credentials and require immediate relinquishment of the person's leadership duties in the CRC Churches International, pending an investigation and judgment thereon by the relevant Issuing Authority.
- 11.4 The State Chairman and National Chairman may together take such action when they determine that a suspension is appropriate given the circumstances of the case, and notwithstanding that the person concerned may not at that time have had sufficient opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- 11.5 The State Executive is to fully consult and work with the Local Church Oversight. It is also expected that the State Executive will make provision for ministry and counseling support to be given to the Local Church, its Oversight and any other aggrieved parties.

State Constitution Appendix 1 Item II Clause 3 has more detail as follows

3. SUSPENSION OF CREDENTIAL

When the State and National Chairman decide it is appropriate to suspend a Minister's Credential in accordance with clause 11 of this Constitution, the following procedure shall apply:

- 3.1 The relevant State Chairman and National Chairman shall notify the Minister of the decision to suspend their Credential. Suspension is to take effect immediately from the date of notification.
- 3.2 Notification may, in the first instance, be made verbally by the National Chairman. The notification must also be put in writing in a letter signed by both the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman. This notification may be in the form of two letters signed separately by the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman or, in one letter signed jointly by both the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman. A copy of the letter/s of notification are to be forwarded to the relevant State Executive and National Executive Members.
- 3.3 The person concerned has no right of appeal against the suspension however the suspension must be investigated in accordance with clause 11 of the Constitution. The suspension must be reviewed by the respective State Executive, in the case of Trainee and Credentialled Ministers or by the National Executive, in the case of a National Credentialled Ministers.
- 3.4 Suspension is "temporary" until such time as the matter can be investigated and reviewed by the appropriate issuing authority. This review process would normally be completed as soon as possible, preferably within a 3 month period and generally not more than 6 months from the date of issue of the suspension. During the period of the suspension the Minister is to hand in their Credential to the State Chairman and loses the right to represent the Church, preside at public services, weddings, funerals and committee meetings: or be involved in any of the financial transactions of the Church. (E.g. signing cheques, operating credit cards).
- 3.5 After the matter has been investigated the Minister's Credential must either be forfeited under the provisions of clause 11 or the suspension lifted.
- 3.6 Where the suspension is lifted this should be notified in writing to the Minister in a letter jointly signed by the relevant State Chairman and National Chairman.

6.2.2. Credential Forfeiture Provisions excerpted from a State Constitution

A State Constitution excerpt

Forfeiture will usually, but not always, follow suspension. Due to the serious and notionally permanent nature of this, and the resultant implications for all concerned, the focus is mainly on the procedure to ensure the Minister is well aware of the charges and has time to present submissions, in sufficient time, to the senior CRC peers appointed. These peers will make any such inquiries they wish so as to arrive at an opinion as to the facts, the seriousness, and any courses of action open to them, including any appeals, to be determined as follows in an example shown here in Appendix 1, Item II. Clause 1.

II. PROCEDURE FOR FORFEITURE OF CREDENTIALS

I. THE PROCEDURE

- 1.1 When a Minister of the CRC Churches International is required to forfeit their Credential according to clause 11.1(a)(b)(c)(d) of this Constitution, the following procedure shall be adopted by the State Executive.

- 1.2 The person concerned shall be given thirty (30) days' notice in writing of the proposal and such written notice shall provide general particulars of the allegations made against them.
- 1.3 The person concerned shall have the right to make written submissions responding to the allegations, which written submissions must be forwarded to the State Chairman within seven (7) days prior to the proposed meeting.
- 1.4 Should the State Executive or its representatives deem it appropriate it may invite the person concerned to present oral submissions.
- 1.5 In the event that there is a dispute as to material allegations of fact, then the State Executive or its representatives may make such inquiries as it deems fit, and may make findings of fact, which findings shall be binding upon the person concerned. Provided that they shall be given reasonable notice of the evidence against them and a reasonable opportunity to present evidence on their behalf, in such a manner as the Executive or its representatives shall determine.
- 1.6 Nothing herein shall require the Executive or its representatives to hear oral evidence, or to allow the person concerned to be represented by legal counsel.
- 1.7 Nothing herein shall require the Executive or its representatives to be bound by the rules of evidence, but they shall act according to equity, good conscience and substantial merit of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forums

6.2.4. Credential Suspension & Forfeiture Appeal rights excerpted from a State Constitution

An appeal process ensures that reviews and justice is possible at all levels. An appeal will normally follow Forfeiture rather than a Suspension simply because a Suspension triggers an investigation anyway, which will then usually follow the Forfeiture process until it is resolved. Follows is the general Right of Appeal Process. In practice a subcommittee would usually make a recommendation then approved by the State Executive. The person(s) of interest could then make an appeal to the entire State or National Executive who would review the decision as described. In certain circumstances it may be possible for the National Executive to review a decision by the State Executive if a dispute were claimed between the person(s) of interest and the State Executive. Proper justice would also cover adequately addressing any conflicts of interest that may be present. The following example is from a State Constitution Appendix 1, Item II Clause 2.

1. THE RIGHT OF APPEAL

- 2.1 The person concerned shall institute the appeal within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the decision. It shall be given in written notice to the State Council or National Executive whichever is the relevant body in relation to their Credential. The only grounds of such an appeal shall be that the decision of the State Executive or its representatives was arrived at in breach of the rules of natural justice and/or that the penalty resulting from the decision was manifestly excessive.
- 2.2 Where the relevant body is the State Council or its nominated officers, the appeal shall be decided by three (3) Members of the State Council appointed by the State Chairman. In the event that the National Executive is the relevant body then three (3) Members of the National Council, appointed by

the National Chairman shall decide the appeal. Only those Members who have had a National Minister's Credential for 10 years or more and who were not involved in the making of the decision which is the subject of the appeal are eligible for appointment to such Board of Appeal.

- 2.3 The body to whom the appeal is made, shall determine the appeal within a reasonable time and shall make such inquiries as it deems fit in the circumstances. Provided always that such body and the person concerned shall have reasonable opportunity to make submissions in respect of the appeal whether written or oral as the Board of Appeal may determine.

7.0 DISAFFILIATION FROM THE CRC

Disaffiliation is the process whereby a Member Church would seek to no longer be a Member Church of the CRC or, indeed, the CRC may seek to terminate the affiliation of a Church.

7.1 A Church wishes to disaffiliate.

For proper security it is necessary for a Church to be able to disaffiliate as no one can guarantee that a Membership body will not be infiltrated and otherwise seek to radically depart from the established Chartered precepts. Furthermore, no one can guarantee that our national society environment will not make it untenable to be in a recognised relationship like the CRC. However, there are many other reasons a current Senior Minister or Board of Oversight may seek to depart from the CRC.

There are six basic scenarios of a Church seeking disaffiliation, ignoring windup situations:

- The Church has a founding senior minister,
- The Church has come from another movement and still has that senior minister so is like to a founding senior minister and may well be the founding senior minister also,
- The Church comes from another movement and has a different senior minister,
- The Church has a senior minister not the founder,
- The Church is in another State, or
- The Church is not in Australia.

The last situation of Churches outside of Australia, affiliated through a sponsoring Church, is likely to be outside of the scope of our Executives to be involved to any great extent. They will likely stand willing to assist relationally but it is likely to be a matter for the sponsoring Church albeit keeping the State Chairman informed.

If the matter of a Church in another state, yet affiliated with the state in question, involves a transfer to another state rather than a permanent disaffiliation then it is a simple liaison matter between states. If the new state has agreed to receive it then sensible minutes can recognise a seamless affiliation though disaffiliated (transfer) from one state and re-affiliated with another. If not, it reverts to a scenario of one of the first three scenarios. If there is any conflict between States on this matter then refer to the justice clauses of the national constitution.

In all four of the first and remaining scenarios the CRC would attempt to resolve any and all issues to facilitate ongoing fellowship, co-operation and partnership.

If that fails then, in the first two instances of churches still with their founding minister, the CRC respects the unique sacrifice and calling of founding senior ministers. Providing there are no other complications of trust, or of sin, or error that would impact upon the CRC's duty of care to the congregation in keeping silent, then, after due attempts to be united, the CRC is likely to have a stance of releasing them to go without further ado.

However in cases where there is a desire to leave to escape discipline (e.g. a fallen minister refuses accountability), there are substantial trusts of investment and giving, or it is a

generational trust then the CRC will advocate very strongly to protect the interests of those that may not be able to speak for themselves and certainly for the interests of the CRC in general.

The ordained ministers of the CRC have taken vows to be loyal to the CRC and to build together the kingdom of God. The breaking of these vows, and the division, or splitting off of a Church is not considered a virtue. Generally we consider that if a minister has a mandate to start a movement or wants to join another movement he should go and plant another Church to establish his own foundation, or take a position in a Church of the denomination of his choosing.

Churches that have become Member Churches of the CRC have usually done so in a CRC context or made a considerable sacrifice to do so. Future Senior Ministers take on a trust to build on this foundation and honour it as a steward. Senior Ministers do not own the Church but are stewards who lay down their lives to develop it, and then pass the baton to the next Senior Minister.

It is most likely that the wishes of the Senior Minister are the major influence in the Church concerning leaving the CRC. The position of trust and influence is so great that a Board and congregation can easily be groomed to be predisposed to leaving the CRC. In this sense it is not Churches that leave the CRC, but Senior Ministers who also wish to take the Church with them.

It is shocking to think that the future of hundreds of people and the trust of the ages could be being directed by the affections of one person. Conceptually, once the Church becomes a generational Church it should not happen because of the obvious implicit trust involved. Nevertheless, it is healthy for the CRC itself to provide a mechanism for Churches to disaffiliate to avoid concerns about possible future adverse situations mentioned at the outset, should such a situation develop.

7.1.1. Order of Events in Disaffiliation

Over time the CRC has developed a careful and gracious process that still favours the Church but ensures that light is shone on this matter.

- a. Events should occur in a specific order. If the Senior Minister is already under evaluation concerning a suspension provision or is under suspension or notice of forfeiture, this matter should be dealt with first for the well-being of the congregants.
- b. Likewise, the Senior Minister and other ministers should not ordinarily resign until the disaffiliation is resolved as stated in the Ministry Guidelines 5.4. Otherwise the CRC may recognise the resignations of credentials but not the disaffiliation if there is something wrong with the process. This could create another problem by triggering the Governing Church provisions if the Board were not then otherwise viable.
- c. So the process involves the Board informing the CRC that it is discussing the matter and CRC State Executive representatives meeting with the Church Board to discuss the matter together. This ensures that Board Members and CRC Members can communicate directly. It would naturally involve trying to resolve Church concerns continuing to be a CRC Church which would likely give rise to CRC concerns that

need discussion. Conceivably this could take a number of meetings to work through matters honourably.

- d. If discussions about amicable resolutions failed then the main focus would necessarily involve how to address the degree of CRC trust in the Church. Some of these trusts may be legal, and some of them may be implicit. An example of a legal trust may be gifts given to the Church because it was a CRC Church whether for general reserves, property or even start-up capital such as in Church plant grant funding. Other trusts may be implicit such as credentialed ministers who have gone before and volunteered their lives to start and/or develop a CRC Church. In heaven these intentions still speak, and the CRC would speak and negotiate for them.
- e. Once negotiations had gone as far as possible in resolving trusts the discussion would turn to the manner of CRC's representation to the Church general meeting of Members meeting. This will depend largely on any unresolved matters of trust, but ordinarily the CRC would express its history, vision, connection and benefits to the local Church imploring it to continue to walk with the CRC; all done in a respectful manner.

The provision for the CRC to speak to the motion before the Members solves many potential problems. By having a Members meeting the Members share in the making of such a huge decision affecting them

- Decisions usually have 'pros' as well as 'cons' concerning them. The CRC is in the best position to give the congregation the information on the 'con' side so as to be fully informed about the decision. It removes any exclusion that 'tunnel vision' can produce when one is already committed to a course of action.
 - The combined weight of the Membership may be able to take responsibility for any generational trust involved.
 - If a quorum is produced and the vote is carried, the Church the Board and the CRC and the whole council will know that the decision was made 'in the light' and that the CRC is free of the guilt of any generational trust, and that the whole congregation has taken responsibility for that trust.
- f. If the Board resolves to go ahead, a General Meeting date would be set at which the CRC would speak to the motion. Considering that a change of constitution is also required, the effective date would logically be the effective date of a new constitution acceptable to the department of justice. The Local Church Membership in place until confirmation is received from the department of justice.
 - g. Finally, any ministers who wish to resign their credentials are then advisable to do so.

7.1.2. A state constitution excerpt shows a typical wording.

- 5.8 Withdrawal from Affiliation
- 5.8.1 Any Local Church affiliated with the CRC Churches International may withdraw from the Association provided that the following requirements are met:
 - (a) In the event that the Church intends to withdraw from the CRC, notice of the Church Board's decision shall be given in writing to the State Chairman to enable representatives of the State Executive of the CRC to meet with the Board of the Church before a final decision is taken by the Board to discuss the reason for their proposed action. The State Executive shall be given at least 30 days' notice of such a meeting of the Board.
 - (b) the Oversight of the Local Church has voted unanimously for such withdrawal

- (c) a properly convened Special General Meeting of the Members of the Church has been called to discuss the proposed withdrawal
- (d) formal notice has been given to the Members of the Church stating the nature, date, time and place of such meeting at least four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting
- (e) notification of the nature, date, time and place of such meeting has been given in writing by the Oversight to the Chairperson of the State Executive at least four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, so that representatives of the State Executive may attend and address the meeting
- (f) at such meeting a four-fifths majority of the currently registered Members of the Church must be in agreement with any motion to withdraw.

7.2 If the CRC considers terminating the affiliation of a Church.

This is a very rare event, but could conceivably occur if the CRC desired to protect itself from a Church outside CRC guidelines. In that eventuality the CRC may seek to terminate the affiliation of a Church, which would likely involve the cancelling of Credentials, the withdrawal of rights to the use of the CRC names and logos, and probably an urgent need for the Church to reconstitute itself. The following is an example from a state constitution Appendix 1, Item III, Clauses 1 & 2.

1. THE PROCEDURE

When the State Executive proposes to consider terminating the affiliation of any Local Church according to clause 5.4 of this Constitution the following procedure shall be followed.

- 1.1 The Local Church concerned shall be given 30 days' notice in writing of the proposal to consider terminating its affiliation and such written notice shall provide general particulars of the allegations against the Local Church.
- 1.2 The Local Church shall have the right to make written submissions responding to the allegations, which written submissions must be forwarded to the State Executive within seven (7) days prior to the proposed meeting.
- 1.3 Should the State Executive deem it appropriate it may invite the Local Church to present oral submissions.
- 1.4 In the event that there is a dispute as to material allegations of fact then the State Executive can make such inquiries as it deems fit and make findings of fact which findings shall bind the Local Church, provided that the Local Church shall be given reasonable notice of the evidence against it and a reasonable opportunity to present evidence on its behalf in such a manner as the State Executive shall determine.
- 1.5 Nothing herein shall require the State Executive to hear oral evidence, or to be bound by the rules of evidence or to allow the Local Church to be represented by legal counsel.
- 1.6 The decision of the State Executive shall be recorded in writing and a copy thereof provided to the Local Church concerned.

2. THE RIGHT OF APPEAL

If the State Executive decides to terminate the affiliation of any Local Church, then the Local Church concerned shall have the right of appeal according to clause 5.4.3 of this Constitution.

- 2.1 The appeal shall be made to the State Council and shall be decided by three Members of the State Council who are nominated by the State Chairman and are not Members of the State Executive. If this fails a further right of appeal to the National Executive which shall be decided by three Members of the National Executive nominated by the National Chairman.
- 2.2 The grounds of the appeal shall always and only be that the decision was arrived at in breach of natural justice or that the decision was manifestly excessive.
- 2.3 The appeal shall be instituted by the Local Church giving written notice to the State Executive and also to the body to which the appeal is to be made within 30 days of receiving notice of the decision and shall set out precise particulars of the alleged breach or breaches of natural justice, or why they consider the decision to be manifestly excessive.
- 2.4 The body to whom the appeal is made shall determine the appeal within a reasonable time and shall make such inquiries as it deems fit in the circumstances, provided always that the State Executive and the Local Church concerned shall have a reasonable opportunity to make submissions in respect of the appeal.
- 2.5 In the event that the State Council or the National Executive allows the appeal the matter shall be remitted to the State Executive to be re-determined.

8.0 CRC DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESSES

In addition to the appeal procedure outlined for Credential and Corporate Membership appeals, there is a General Procedure, for resolving disputes in all other situations where the parties are not able to resolve it between themselves, as outlined for example, in Appendix 1, Item I, Clauses 1 & 2 of a State Constitution as follows.

PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES

1. THE PROCEDURE

If a matter cannot be settled according to the scriptural and mediation basis referred to in clauses 5.6.1-2 – 5.7.1-2, 6.6.1-3 and 6.7.1-3 of this Constitution then the following procedure shall be adopted by the State Executive.

- 1.1 The State Executive shall give 30 days' notice in writing that it proposes to consider the matter in dispute. The notice shall require the parties to the dispute to make written submissions concerning the matter. The submissions must be forwarded to the State Executive and the other party, or parties, to the dispute within 14 days prior to the proposed meeting of the State Executive.
- 1.2 Should the State Executive deem it appropriate it may invite the parties to submit responding written submissions, and/or to present oral submissions.
- 1.3 In the event that there is a dispute as to the material allegations of fact, then the State Executive shall make such inquiries, as it deems fit and make findings of fact thereon. Provided that the parties shall be given reasonable opportunity to present further evidence, in such a manner as the State Executive shall determine.
- 1.4 Nothing herein shall require the State Executive to hear oral evidence or to allow the person/s concerned to be represented by legal counsel.
- 1.5 Nothing herein shall require the State Executive to be bound by the rule of evidence, but the State Executive shall act according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities and legal forums.
- 1.6 The decision of the State Executive shall be recorded in writing and a copy thereof provided to the parties of the dispute.

2. THE RIGHT OF APPEAL

Any of the parties to the dispute may appeal to the National Executive whose decision thereon shall be final and binding upon the parties, provided always that the only grounds of such appeal shall be that the decision was arrived at in breach of natural justice or that the decision was manifestly unfair.

- 2.1 The appeal to the National Executive shall be heard by a Disputes Committee, comprised of three (3) Ministers appointed by the National Chairman, such Ministers to have each held a National Minister's Credential for not less than 10 years.
- 2.2 The Disputes Committee shall institute the appeal within 14 days of their appointment giving written notice to the State Executive of the appeal and the grounds on which it is asserted the State Executives decision was in error.
- 2.3 The Ministers hearing the appeal shall make such inquiries as they deem fit in the circumstances, provided always that the State Executive and the parties to the dispute shall have a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions in respect of the matters raised in the appeal.

- 2.4 The appeal shall be determined by a simple majority.
- 2.5 In the event that the appeal is allowed, the matter shall be remitted to the State Executive to be determined in accordance with such directions as may be given by those Ministers who heard the appeal and comprised majority.
- 2.6 If any of the parties to the dispute fails to abide by the decision of the State Executive, or where there has been an appeal, the outcome of the appeal, such person or persons shall be deemed to be in breach of this Constitution, and the Charter of the CRC Churches International Australia Incorporated. They shall then be liable to disciplinary action, which may include the forfeiture of that person's Credential, or in the case of an Affiliated Church the cancellation of their affiliation.
- 2.7 There is no right of appeal once the Disputes Committee has made a determination.

CRC Churches International
Church Affiliation Application

STATE EXECUTIVE

SECTION I CHURCH DETAILS

1	Name of Church			
2	Address			
3	Phone (home)		Phone (work)	
4	Fax		Email	
5	Pastor's Name			
6	Address			
7	Phone (home)		Phone (work)	

8	Names of Oversight/Elders		Phone	
			Phone	

9	Numerical size of congregation in regular attendance (3 times/month)	Adults		Children (U15)	
10	Size 2 years ago	Adults		Children (U15)	
11	Previous Denominational Affiliation (if any)				
12	History of Church	Commencement Date			
		Pioneering Pastor			

13	History of Senior Pastor(s)			
		Name	Date (started)	Date (finished)
a.				
b.				
c.				
d.				
e.				
f.				

14	Has the church had any major split or division? <i>(If yes, please attach details)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		<input type="checkbox"/> No
15	Is the Church in good standing within the local community?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

16	What property assets does the Church have?		
		Value	\$
17	What other assets does the Church have?		
		Value	\$
18	What is the current financial status of the Church? <i>(Please attach an annual financial statement for the previous three years)</i>	Mortgage	\$
		Bank Balance	\$
		Outstanding Debts	\$

19	What is the reason you are applying for affiliation with CRC Churches International? <i>(Please attach details if necessary)</i>	
-----------	---	--

20	Has your Oversight team read the CRC Churches International Constitution, State and Local Constitution, Credential Guidelines and Charter?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
21	Does your Church and Oversight support this affiliation application?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
22	Do you know of any reasons that would prevent this application from approval? <i>(If yes please attach details)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

23	Please attach the Following Items:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Your Local Church Constitution or "By Laws" 2 Minutes of Oversight/Board for last 12 months 3 Audited financial statement from previous three years 4 Current financial statement 5 Statement of faith (If one is in existence) 6 Copy of Property trust deed or equivalent 7 Minutes verifying support of affiliation application

24	Signatures of Applicants	Date
	Senior Pastor	
	Oversight Member/Elder	

SECTION II OFFICE USE ONLY

Date discussed by State Executive	
Result of Discussion	
Remarks	

CODE OF MINISTRY ETHICS

CRC CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL

CONTENTS

1. Preamble	Page 2
2. Attitudes Expected of Pastors.....	Page 4
3. Responsibilities to God	Page 6
4. Responsibilities to Others	Page 7
4.1 Family	Page 7
4.2 Congregation.....	Page 8
4.2.1 General.....	Page 8
4.2.2 Relational Issues	Page 8
4.2.3 Pulpit Matters.....	Page 9
4.2.4 Financial Considerations	Page 10
4.3 Community	Page 10
4.4 Peers	Page 11
4.5 My Denomination.....	Page 12
4.6 Other Denominations.....	Page 13
5. Responsibilities to Self.....	Page 13
6. Ministerial Vow.....	Page 15
7. Sources, Acknowledgements and References	Page 15

1. PREAMBLE

The wisdom and teaching of Scripture is the basis for formulating this code of ethics; and perhaps the single scripture which best describes how we should live to please God is Micah 6:8, which The Message translation renders: “*But He’s already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It’s quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbour, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don’t take yourself too seriously – take God seriously.*”

However, there is often a disparity in what people judge to be “fair and just” in dealing with others. Likewise the manner in which we “take God seriously” and not take ourselves “too seriously” needs clarification. The code of ethics addresses this by declaring more specifically how we should behave in relation to God, others and ourselves.

Of course it is impossible to legislate or proscribe the correct course of action for a pastor in every situation where a moral/ethical decision must be made, and any attempt to provide a comprehensive list of required responses in various situations will invariably be deficient. Nevertheless, having an accepted set of guidelines should aid a pastor to make the right decision when faced with an ethical choice.

A further benefit of a ministerial code of ethics is that it constitutes an agreed standard of behaviour whereby a pastor’s character may be assessed. Failure to behave in an acceptable manner may indicate a lack of wisdom or a wayward attitude, and a continuance in the same behaviour will reveal or result in a character flaw.

Attitude is the crucial factor, the foundation for making the correct decision when confronted with an ethical dilemma. A right attitude should lead to correct behaviour, and behaviour over an extended period defines character. Therefore this code of ethics firstly identifies the key attitudes which should prevail in a pastor’s life. Pastors can attempt to evaluate themselves against the listed attitudes, but their peers can also make an assessment based on observed behaviour and personal interaction. Basically, the attitudes which every mature Christian should have are those which Jesus displayed, and so it is reasonable to expect that such attitudes should be readily observable in pastors and Christian leaders.

Any Christian code of ethics will recognise love as the essential quality to be nurtured and exercised in the pursuit of ethical behaviour. The love of God is the pre-eminent issue, with the love of others and love of self (or self worth, self respect) being the next most important considerations in determining appropriate conduct. As already intimated, a three-fold classification of responsibilities - in relation to God, others and ourselves – is appropriate, and this order is employed to enumerate the responsibilities and behaviour expected of all our CRC Churches International pastors. The section dealing with “others” is necessarily the largest, and has numerous subdivisions for ease of use.

To facilitate application of the code of ethics, the main sections comprise a series of “I will ...” statements. These clearly reveal what individuals are committed to doing on acceptance of the code. It is fitting that the text of the ministerial vow, which really encapsulates the spirit and essence of the code of ethics, concludes the document.

For the sake of simplicity the terms “pastor” and “pastoral” are generally used throughout the document, instead of “credentialed minister” or “ministerial.” Moreover, the code of ethics has been formulated with the traditional church pastor very much in mind. Consequently some of the stipulated requirements are inappropriate for ministers holding Specialist Minister Credentials (e.g., evangelists), Retired Ministers or pastors in para-church organisations. It is hoped that all of those special classes of credentialed ministers will be readily able to identify the specific “I will ...” statements which do not apply to them, and accordingly feel free to ignore inappropriate requirements.

2. ATTITUDES EXPECTED OF PASTORS

2.1 LOVING – John 13:35 1 Peter 1:22

An attitude of love is the mark of a true follower of Christ (John 13:35) and should be the outstanding characteristic of Christian leaders. Pastors can evaluate the degree to which a loving attitude is prevalent in their lives by reference to God's description of love in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13. Some of the virtues associated with love are kindness, patience, forgiveness, perseverance, generosity, contentment and self-control.

2.2 HUMBLE – Philippians 2:3-8 James 4:6-10

Humility is another hallmark of a mature Christian. Pastors should acknowledge their total dependence on the Lord and be in submission to His will. It is perhaps easier to assess humility by checking for the opposite attitude of pride, which displays itself in our interaction with others as arrogance, an unwillingness to admit faults, non-acceptance of criticism and failure to fully acknowledge the contribution of others in any team successes.

2.3 MERCIFUL – Matthew 18:21-35 Luke 6:36

None of us could survive without God's mercy being extended to us, and this should motivate us to have a merciful attitude towards others. We must fulfil our responsibilities to administer justice and address wrongful behaviour. But when we do, we should temper our judgment with mercy, and refrain from exacting the maximum admissible penalty for an offence if a fair, but less painful, ruling can be made.

2.4 GRACE-FILLED – 2 Corinthians 8:7-9 1 Peter 3:8,9; 4:10

God not only shows us mercy, but favour and blessing which are likewise undeserved. We should cultivate this same attitude, seeking to be instruments of God's grace to enrich the lives of others, irrespective of merit, as we have opportunity to do so. God's grace to us is free, but also immeasurably costly, and we need to realise that our outworking of a grace-filled attitude will cost us in time and resources.

2.5 TEACHABLE – Proverbs 1:5; 18:15 Colossians 3:16

Good pastors recognise that there are always others who possess more wisdom, learning or experience than themselves, and a teachable spirit will enable them to access and utilise such knowledge. Those who are most teachable will be marked by their willingness to listen more than they speak and a commitment to search for wisdom and openness to consider opinions different to those they currently hold.

2.6 ACCOUNTABLE – Romans 14:12 Hebrews 3:13

Ultimately we are accountable to God for our actions and words, but He has also made us accountable to each other so that we can correct, encourage and challenge one another. Those who are unwilling to submit their lives to the inspection of their peers or who refuse needed correction are destined for trouble. Whereas those with a heart to live accountably with fellow Christians reap the benefits which will help safeguard their ministry effectiveness.

2.7 RESPECTFUL – 1 Peter 2:17 Romans 12:10

The Lord encourages us to “Show proper respect to everyone” and “Honour one another above yourselves.” A respectful attitude should characterise all Christians, and especially those exercising leadership. The temptation to feel superior to others because of status or God-given abilities must be strongly resisted. Recognising every individual as a person for whom Christ died, will help us to give due respect to others. Particular respect should be shown to those deserving of special honour or recognition, such as the elderly and godly leaders.

2.8 SUBMISSIVE – 1 Peter 2:13,14 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13

Evidence of our submission before God is shown by our willingness to submit to godly leadership and our acceptance of God-ordained discipline. For CRC Churches International pastors, a submissive attitude entails a willingness to accept the movement’s major directives and requirements, unless a contrary response can be justified on the grounds of Scripture.

2.9 SERVANT-LEADERSHIP – Mark 10:35-37 1 Peter 5:2,3

Mature Christian leaders should see themselves as serving the Body of Christ, as opposed to using their position to have others serve them. The attitude of servant-leadership is best exemplified by Jesus, and perhaps illustrated most dramatically when He washed the disciples’ feet on the eve of His death. Pastors do well when they seek to cultivate this attitude, for it will inspire others to serve willingly and sacrificially in God’s Kingdom.

The following sections attempt to cover, either specifically or by association, the majority of ministry situations which may require an ethical choice. However, in the event of a scenario where the proper course of action is unclear, it is suggested that pastors should seek first to align their mind-set with the above attitudes. Their ensuing behaviour is then likely to be correct.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES TO GOD

3.1 Our foremost responsibility is to love God. In the context of ethical behaviour, it has been said “Love God and do as you please,” with the reasoning that if our love for God is genuine we will automatically do what is right. However it is all too easy to claim to love God, while neglecting to do those things which substantiate our confession. Our love for God must be tangible, and the Bible clearly reveals what we should do in order to love God and please Him. As we relate to God in the way He requires, our love for God will be both validated and strengthened, and we can more readily choose to act ethically in every situation.

3.2 To fulfil my responsibility of loving God, I will:

3.2.1 Worship Him by presenting my total being to Him (Romans 12:1)

3.2.2 Develop a regular devotional life by:

- **Expressing adoration, praise and thankfulness** to Him and committing to frequent corporate worship.
- **Deepening my fellowship with Him through prayer**, taking time to listen to His voice as well as expressing my failures, concerns and petitions.
- **Reading and studying the Scriptures**, applying its revealed truth to my life.
- **Meditating on key Scripture verses** and passages to allow God’s Spirit to maximise their effectiveness.

3.2.3 Act in obedience to God’s commands and seek to do His revealed will.

3.2.4 Have the goal of a lifestyle which is fully pleasing and **glorifying to God**.

3.2.5 Recognise that **serving God** and working in cooperation with His Spirit to extend His Kingdom is a privilege that demands **my best efforts**.

3.2.6 Accept that I can take no credit for my **talents and abilities** – they are given by God – and **diligently seek to develop** them to their fullest measure to bless the Body of Christ.

3.2.7 Embrace the principle of tithing, acknowledging God’s ownership of all that I have by giving a minimum of 10% of my income.

3.2.8 Cultivate a generous disposition, realising that any material blessings I enjoy are to be shared with others.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES TO OTHERS

Our responsibility to love others is fulfilled as we serve them, seeking to put their interests and welfare above our own, and acting with kindness and compassion as opportunity or need dictates. The concept is simple, but the execution is fraught with difficulties. Having clearly defined guidelines for specific circumstances, especially when different courses of action might seem plausible and even appealing, is helpful. Hence the following scenarios are included, covering situations as diverse as family relationships and denominational responsibilities.

As before, the behaviour expected of pastors is expressed in the form of personal commitments.

4.1 FAMILY

With regard to my family, I will:

- 4.1.1 **Give each family member the time, consideration and support they need.**
- 4.1.2 **Protect my spouse** from the excessive demands or expectations which can occur in ministry, while releasing her/him to fulfil the ministry roles which they feel called and gifted to do.
- 4.1.3 [Husbands] **Love my wife** sacrificially, as exemplified by Jesus in His love for the church.
- 4.1.4 [Wives] **Submit to my husband**, as exemplified by Jesus in His submission to His Father.
- 4.1.5 Seek to ensure that my **children receive the nurture** and encouragement they deserve, and prayerfully commit them to God for their salvation, ongoing **Christian growth and ministry service**.
- 4.1.6 Help my children to deal with the undue expectations and unfair criticisms that sometimes befall pastors' children.
- 4.1.7 **Maintain a positive attitude to my pastoral responsibilities** and the congregation in front of my children, encouraging in them a sense of pride and respect for the ministry.
- 4.1.8 Recognise that married couples and families will expect my family to **model how a solid Christian family should operate**, and seek to provide them with a good example.
- 4.1.9 Allow others to see that my family is not exempt from the worries, problems and pressures common to most families, and inspire them by the godly way we handle difficult situations.
- 4.1.10 Endeavour, with the support of my spouse, to ensure that the financial needs and obligations of my family are met in a responsible fashion.
- 4.1.11 Plan to have **an annual family holiday** in which the whole family can be strengthened and refreshed.

- 4.1.12** Program regular time slots for relaxation and relational intimacy with my spouse, and try to have an extended time with each child for relational building several times a year.

4.2 CONGREGATION

With regard to my congregation, I will:

4.2.1 General

- a. **Fulfil my designated duties and responsibilities** to the best of my ability.
- b. **Seek to be an example of Christ-like behaviour**, displaying love, faith and integrity in a way which will inspire and assist others to follow.
- c. **Act impartially** in all my dealings, refusing to allow special friendships or influential members to prevent me giving fair treatment to every person.
- d. **Avoid starting or passing on gossip**, and diligently attempt to stop others from engaging in this destructive behaviour.
- e. **Maintain strict confidentiality** in any counselling setting, unless legally obligated to disclose certain facts or unless failure to pass on information would endanger the safety of others.
- f. **Keep confidential pastoral records**, particularly in regard to counselling appointments and other sensitive matters.
- g. **Open my home to others**, recognising that hospitality is a wonderful way to build friendships and trust.
- h. **Attempt to address the spiritual, emotional and physical needs** of the congregation, utilising the resources of my ministry team and/or appropriate congregational members to affect pastoral care.
- i. **Limit the number of speaking invitations I accept** from other churches/groups, since my primary responsibility is to my own congregation.
- j. **Not hold membership in any secret society**, as this would adversely affect the trust of those in my church.
- k. **Not abuse the power of my pastoral position** for personal gain or to exercise unhealthy control over vulnerable individuals.
- l. **Avail myself of appropriate literature, courses and conferences** which will help me to better fulfil my pastoral responsibilities and grow as a Christian Leader.
- m. **Admit to my professional limitations**, arranging referrals and/or seeking help from other pastors, counsellors, etc. in situations where I am not competent to provide the needed help for anyone in my congregation.

4.2.2 Relational issues

- a. **Be circumspect in all my relationships**, particularly with the opposite sex, recognising the danger of entrapment in co-dependent and overly-close relationships and try to avoid even the appearance of wrong doing.
- b. **Not minister to a person of the opposite sex**, unless in the presence of one or more responsible people or in a setting that can be seen and is interruptible by a responsible person.
- c. **Be wise when ministering to children**, recognising their special vulnerabilities and my duty of care obligations. (Refer to CRC Children's Duty of Care Guidelines)
- d. **Be cautious when making a ministry home visit** to a person of the opposite sex, and avoid the possibility of a compromising situation developing by having my spouse or a trusted colleague accompany me.
- e. **Endeavour not to provide unaccompanied transport for a person of the opposite sex**, or a child, outside of family relations.
- f. **Seek to work harmoniously with my Church Board or Eldership Team**, respecting their God-given role. When I exercise the position of Senior Pastor I will provide wise and courageous leadership and also make myself accountable to the Leadership Team. I will submit myself to correction and even dismissal in the event of a major moral failure or an irreparable leadership crisis; and be open to counsel and direction from Senior Ministers within our CRC Churches International movement. (Refer to CRC Senior Pastors/Eldership Board Guidelines)
- g. **Show loyalty and support for my Senior Pastor**, if I do not myself hold that position, and foster supportive and respectful relationships with other team members.
- h. **Be approachable and open to correction and instruction** from my Senior Pastor, fellow pastors and others who have genuine and godly interest in my well-being.

4.2.3 Pulpit matters

- a. **Devote sufficient time for prayer, study and sermon preparation** to enable me to preach anointed, Scripturally-sound messages in a way that will lead people to Christ and build their spiritual lives.
- b. **Not use the pulpit to humiliate anyone, denigrate other pastors or denominations**, or make political statements in a way which could polarise and harm the congregation.
- c. **Avoid condemnatory preaching**; rather seek to allow the convicting work of the Holy Spirit to have full expression.
- d. **Not use the pulpit for self-aggrandisement**, but rather focus attention on Jesus.
- e. **Try to eliminate any annoying or offensive mannerisms** which could distract listeners from hearing the message that is being given.

- f. **Give opportunity**, whenever practical, **for potential ministers to develop in their preaching gift.**
- g. **Exercise care in inviting guests to minister**, making sure they are properly briefed and willing to abide by the guidelines given them, as the welfare of my congregation is at stake.
- h. Be generous in the hospitality and payment offered to guest ministries, particularly if they draw no regular salary.

4.2.4 Financial considerations

- a. **Abstain from personally handling church finances**, in so far as this is possible, by appointing qualified personnel to deal with the various financial transactions and record keeping required.
- b. **Ensure that adequate safeguards and procedures are in place** to protect and efficiently administer all the funds given to the church.
- c. **Not use any church funds for personal use**, or seek to borrow money from the church.
- d. **Not use my position in the church to gain financial favour** from those in my congregation.
- e. **Not determine my own salary**, but instead I will look to an appointed salary committee or denominational guidelines to set my salary.
- f. **Be honest and transparent with government authorities** in relation to my salary situation and avoid the abuse of fringe benefit concessions.
- g. **Not get involved in any personal money-making schemes** which could adversely affect my reputation or my pastoral work.
- h. **Be transparent with my church leadership when receiving love offerings and gifts**, and abide by church guidelines specifying how such monies/gifts should be handled.
- i. **Offer to perform weddings and funerals for members of my congregation without charge**, if I am being paid a full salary.
- j. **Not embark on any major fundraising venture without the full support of the Church Board/Eldership.**

4.3 COMMUNITY

With regard to my community, I will:

- 4.3.1 **Obey the laws of the land**, unless by so doing I am disobeying God.
- 4.3.2 **Diligently pay my taxes** and fulfil the normal obligations expected of all citizens.
- 4.3.3 **Attempt to live a life that is above reproach**, giving attention to such matters as paying bills on time, being punctual for appointments, displaying courtesy and good manners towards others, and being especially careful to relate to the opposite sex in a manner which is glorifying to God.

- 4.3.4 Act responsibly in the public arena**, knowing that my status as a pastor will draw particular attention which will either help or hinder Christ's work.
- 4.3.5 Recognise** that my primary responsibilities are to my church and family, and ensure my **level of involvement in civic affairs and social action** is not to the detriment of these.
- 4.3.6 Look for opportunities to evangelise**, mindful of the fact that the immediate community is a primary mission field for my church.
- 4.3.7 Seek to develop good relations with civic and local government leaders**, but not at the expense of compromising my pastoral calling.
- 4.3.8 Refuse to publicly align myself so closely with a particular political party that it will alienate some of my congregation** and thereby limit my effectiveness as their pastor.
- 4.3.9 Exercise wisdom when making public statements** on community issues, and ensure such pronouncements are in line with scriptural principles.

4.4 PEERS

With regard to my peers, I will:

- 4.4.1 Act in a spirit of cooperation** rather than competition, recognising my peers as fellow-workers in God's Kingdom.
- 4.4.2 Never publicly criticise or belittle a fellow minister.** Instead attempt to privately correct and encourage them.
- 4.4.3 Endeavour to maintain good relationships with other pastors**, applying the principles outlined in Matthew chapter 18 to resolve any relational difficulties.
- 4.4.4 Draw on the expertise and guidance of my peers** when I am faced with acute problems or critical decisions, and acknowledge their help at the appropriate time.
- 4.4.5 Seek to bless other pastors** by whatever available means, being generous with finances, resources and the sharing of wisdom and experience.
- 4.4.6 Avoid plagiarising another's work**, give due credit and recognition for any ministerial resources that I use, and abide by copyright regulations.
- 4.4.7 Not entice members of another congregation to join mine**; but if I am aware of Christians moving from a neighbouring church to mine, I will contact their previous church leader to apprise them of the move.
- 4.4.8 Give guidance regarding a new spiritual home for any of my church members** who need to move, making contact with a pastor in their new church and writing a letter of transfer if required.
- 4.4.9 Refuse to speak critically of my predecessor** when I move into a new church.

- 4.4.10 Make every effort to help my successor transition easily into their new role** when I leave the church, and discourage any ongoing congregational allegiance to myself that would disadvantage the new minister.
- 4.4.11 Continue to support my Senior Pastor on my retirement;** or, in the event of another pastor taking over my position, help them acquire the information needed to efficiently outwork their new responsibilities.

4.5 MY DENOMINATION

With regard to my denomination, I will:

- 4.5.1 Seek to uphold and live by the core values of the CRC Churches International,** i.e. Word-based, multiplying churches, interdependent ministries, ‘New Creation’ message, Gospel of grace, stable spirituality, contemporary ministry, harmonious relationships, dynamic faith, selfless service.
- 4.5.2 Be loyal to it for as long as I remain within the denomination,** acknowledging both the privileges and responsibilities incumbent on my credential.
- 4.5.3 Encourage loyalty and respect for the denomination** amongst my fellow pastors.
- 4.5.4 Give my own congregation a sense of identity and pride within the denomination,** making them aware of its rich heritage, distinctive emphases and current spiritual directions and strategies.
- 4.5.5 Pay the stipulated fees and levies set by the denomination** so that it can function effectively.
- 4.5.6 Make attendance at State and National Council meetings and conferences a priority,** and where exceptional circumstances prevent my participation I will register an official apology.
- 4.5.7 Responsibly exercise my voting rights,** seeking God’s guidance as I fulfil this duty.
- 4.5.8 Give due respect to the appointed leaders and governing executives in the denomination,** praying for them and submitting myself to their leadership.
- 4.5.9 Accept that I may not always agree with the policies or approach of the appointed leaders, yet disallow myself to react in a way which would undermine their authority** or cause personal offence.
- 4.5.10 Choose to live with a spirit of interdependence,** declining any independent course of action which would detract from the welfare of the denomination as a whole.
- 4.5.11 Utilise the resources that my denomination provides** to improve my ministry effectiveness, as well as offering my time and abilities to benefit the denomination when it is feasible to do so.

- 4.5.12 **Be tolerant of other pastors** whose views and approach to ministry differ from mine, knowing that diversity in thought and action is healthy so long as the essentials of Christian doctrine and conduct are not compromised.
- 4.5.13 **Support my fellow-pastors through encouragement and material help when practical;** and, in the event that I become aware of a serious breach of ministerial ethics or moral failure, I will help the pastor by bringing their behaviour to the attention of the respective state or national leaders to initiate correction and restoration.
- 4.5.14 **Participate in my denomination's mission initiatives,** through prayerful and financial support and by undertaking mission trips as appropriate, while being free to engage in other mission opportunities as God guides.
- 4.5.15 **Resign my credential if** I find I no longer hold to the vision, values and beliefs of my denomination or **cannot willingly submit to the appointed leadership;** and in so doing I will also relinquish any influence or control over my congregation, which will remain in the denomination.

4.6 OTHER DENOMINATIONS

With regard to other denominations, I will:

- 4.6.1 **Seek to have cordial relationships with pastors in other denominations,** and be willing to cooperate in joint activities that will advance God's Kingdom.
- 4.6.2 **Participate in local ministers' fraternal meetings,** if invited to do so.
- 4.6.3 **Pray for and seek to bless churches and leaders,** irrespective of denomination, if they are actively fulfilling Christ's Great Commission.
- 4.6.4 **Maintain a humble attitude towards the leaders and pastors in other denominations,** recognising that my own denomination is not better than every other.
- 4.6.5 **Respect the differences in governmental structures, beliefs and styles of worship in other denominations,** refusing to be critical of them unless they are clearly in contradiction of the tenets of Scripture.
- 4.6.6 **Recognise the disciplinary action taken against any pastor in another denomination,** and ensure that I do not oppose or jeopardise the effectiveness of the discipline even though it may differ from that practised by CRC Churches International.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES TO SELF

God instructs us to "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." Implicit in this command is the assumption that we do love ourselves, and it is apparent that our capacity to love others is limited if we have a poor self image. Furthermore, our ability to serve others is diminished if we do not take due care of our health – spiritual, emotional and physical.

In recognition of these facts, I will:

- 5.1 **Endeavour to live a life of integrity**, being true to the commitments I make to myself as well as other people.
- 5.2 **Regularly practise spiritual disciplines**, such as prayer, celebration, meditation, etc, which will help strengthen my spiritual life.
- 5.3 **Seek to grow intellectually** through wise reading and appropriate study.
- 5.4 **Regulate my social and work-related contacts**, spending time with those who will add to my emotional bank account and contribute to my learning, whilst avoiding excessive exposure to angry/critical/negative people who will sap my emotional energy.
- 5.5 **Attempt to exercise self-control** in every area of my life, maintaining sexual purity, handling finances responsibly and avoiding behavioural extremes which would weaken my Christian witness.
- 5.6 **Avail myself of conferences and courses** (subject to favourable time and financial considerations) which will develop my skills and competencies.
- 5.7 **Manage my time well**, balancing the various obligations and demands of church, family and others with the need for self-care to guard against health problems.
- 5.8 **Take care of my body** through regular exercise, sensible eating habits, adequate sleep and times of relaxation so that I have the energy to fulfil my daily responsibilities and the capacity to serve God effectively over a prolonged period.
- 5.9 **Schedule one day per week for rest from the pressures of work and ministry**, as advocated by God, and plan to take an annual vacation for recreation and refreshing.
- 5.10 **Not abuse alcohol or other drugs** which will be harmful to my health.
- 5.11 **Avoid pornography, gambling and other activities which are demeaning or destructive to my well-being**
- 5.12 **Be accountable for my use of the internet.**

6. MINISTERIAL VOW

I believe I have been called by God and equipped by the Lord Jesus Christ to be a Minister of His Gospel of Grace and a spiritual leader of His people.

I will humbly, obediently and faithfully develop and outwork Christ's calling upon my life, and work together in love and unity with my fellow ministers within our CRC Churches International family.

I acknowledge that God has placed me in the family of the CRC to develop and express the ministry call that He has for my life.

I accept the Vision and Values that we in the CRC regard as the reason why God has called us into existence and commit myself to gather, nurture, serve and release God's people within the purposes of our CRC family.

I will exercise my ministry duties responsibly, be accountable to my spiritual family and submit to the wise checks and balances of my CRC Ministry peers and overseers.

I accept the CRC's ministerial code of ethics and will endeavour to outwork these principles in my life and ministry.

Signed

7. SOURCES, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

T. Burton Pierce, Ministerial Ethics – A Guide for Spirit-Filled Leaders, Logion Press, 1996

James Jones, The Moral Leader – for the Church and the World, IVP, 2002

H Leesment, Pentecostal Ministerial Ethics, 1988

Eugene H. Peterson, Working the Angles – the Shape of Pastoral Integrity

Enrichment Journal, Journal for Pentecostal Ministry, Sample Code of Ethics

Uniting Church in Australia, Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice

Baptist Union of Victoria, Professional Standards and Code of Ethics for Pastors

New Zealand Baptist Churches, Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Pastors of New Zealand Baptist Churches

Roland Croucher, Professionalism, Competence and Integrity – an abbreviated version of a Code of Ethics produced by the author



Australian National Office
185 Frederick Rd, Seaton
SA 5023, Australia
P +618 8356 6999
F + 618 8235 1891
ABN 84 537 473 256
crcchurches.org.au

CRC Churches Social Media Guidelines

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by ministers of CRC Churches International Australia and its related organisations (CRC Churches). For the purposes of this guidelines document, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

CRC Churches' ministers are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. This policy applies to all uses of social media, including personal, by CRC Churches' ministers who are credentialed ministers, as their position with CRC Churches would be well known within the community.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that CRC Churches ministers must otherwise follow, as stated in the CRC Guidelines for Ministerial Ethics.

Setting up Social Media

Social media identities, logon ID's and user names may not use CRC Churches name without prior approval from the National Executive, through the National Administrator.

It is appropriate to use the CRC Churches logo for a church website or FaceBook page. Personal blogs, however, should not use the CRC logo or identify as related to the CRC in any way.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your ministry and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes information about people that they have not already shared on social media themselves. It is best not to disclose any personal information about other people, but it is okay to share posts made by others to your own timeline, so long as other ethical considerations are taken into account in doing this.

Protect your own privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the CRC Churches or your own church's website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you minister in CRC Churches. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Respect copyright laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others; including CRC Churches own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect your audience, CRC Churches, and your co-ministers

The public in general, and CRC Churches' ministers and church family members, reflect a diverse set of points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the CRC Churches' beliefs, vision, purpose, mission, values and ethics, all of which are available on the CRC website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, highly offensive or defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of CRC Churches.

Protect CRC Churches Ministers and Churches

CRC Churches ministers or other churches should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about CRC Churches in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad critics or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct, and it is not ill-informed, exaggerated or embellished.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

For example, consider what might happen if a CRC Churches minister is in a meeting with a potential new Christian, and someone in that person's family has found a blog or post by the minister which is less than savoury, or derogatory of another church or of another ethnic or religious group.

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your blog to embarrass CRC Churches, other churches, ministers or people, is dangerous and ill-advised. Likewise, commenting on areas outside of your expertise or responsibility can open the door for problems.

Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble - it may not have much legal effect.

Don't forget your day job.

Make sure that blogging does not interfere with your ministry role or commitment to be a good witness of Jesus Christ.

Code of Conduct

Violations will be subject to investigation and action under the CRC Churches International Australia Code of Conduct.

Social Networking with Children or Young People

Ministers should be aware of the following expectations in considering their use of social networking sites;

- They have considered the information and images of children or young people available on their sites and are confident that these represent these people in a light acceptable of their role as a minister in CRC Churches International;
- While it is understood that being a ‘friend’ on a personal/private site with a child or young person can be useful in communicating and following up with them for both event marketing and pastoral care, there needs to be a transparency in the communications utilising this medium as is not present in reality. It is thus strongly recommended that ministers set up processes to monitor these communications. These could include boundaries around usage, such as not deleting electronic communications, and regular checks of these communications by a responsible line manager. Church personnel should save copies of conversations whenever possible, especially those that concern the personal sharing of a teenager or young adult.; and
- Comments on their site about their church, colleagues or children or young people, if published, would not cause hurt or embarrassment to others, risk claims of libel or harm the reputation of CRC Churches, their church, their colleagues or children or young people

Be sure to have permission from a child’s parent or guardian before contacting the minor via social media or before posting pictures, video, and other information that may identify that minor.

Parents must have access to everything provided to their children. For example, parents should be made aware of how social media are being used, be told how to access the sites, and be given the opportunity to be copied on all material sent to their children via social networking (including text messages). While parents should be provided with the same material as their children, it does not have to be via the same technology (that is, if children receive a reminder via Twitter, parents can receive it in a printed form or by an e-mail list).

Make everyone aware of the CRC Duty of Care and Child Protection Guidelines, which outline appropriate methods for interacting with children less than 18 years of age.

How to Report and Monitor

Ministers should immediately report unofficial sites that carry the CRC Churches logo to the CRC National Office. It is important that CRC Churches International Australia is able to protect its brand and identity.

Also inform the CRC National Office if you find misinformation on a site. This is especially important when responding to an incorrect wiki, such as Wikipedia, etc.

You are not expected to respond to defamatory, libellous, or slanderous comments—not original postings, but comments—on a site, such as a blog. Report such occurrences as above, and a response will be made on behalf of the Movement if it is thought appropriate to do so.

Churches Commissioning Vow for new Lead Pastors

New Lead Pastor's Response.

<NAME>, in the presence of God, your fellow pastors, and this assembled congregation, do you acknowledge that you have been specifically called by Jesus Christ and equipped by the Holy Spirit to become the Lead Pastor of the <CHURCH>.

... I Do.

<NAME>, will you humbly, obediently and faithfully outwork this new calling to be a Lead Pastor, working loyally together in love and unity within our denominational family, CRC Churches International.

... I will.

<NAME>, do you acknowledge that God has placed you in CRC Churches International and do you accept the beliefs, values, vision, ministry and mission that we in the CRC regard as the reason why God has called us into existence.

... I Do.

<NAME>, will you commit yourself to ministering the Gospel of God's Grace with supernatural signs following, lead people to experience Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord and then gather, nurture, serve, train and release God's people to grow this church within the purposes of the <CHURCH>.

... I will.

<NAME>, will you exercise your leadership duties responsibly and be accountable and loyal to your CRC family

and submit to the Board of Elders and Directors of
<CHURCH>.

... I will.

AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

By the Chairman of the Board of <CHURCH> (or the person performing the inauguration).

On behalf of the Board of Elders and Directors of our **<CHURCH>**, I formally acknowledge you as the new Lead Pastor of the **<CHURCH>**.

The Board of the **<CHURCH>** and your fellow Pastors will pray for you, encourage you and support you in the outworking of Christ's leadership call upon your life, here at **<CHURCH>**.

We recognize your leadership call and the spiritual fruit that attests to its genuineness and your good character, as defined in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and your loyalty to the **<CHURCH>**, and to CRC Churches International.

We now commission you in the name of Jesus Christ through the laying on of hands, anointing with oil and prophetic prayer, to fulfill your new ministry role as a Lead Pastor.

Followed by a time of prayer.