

Risen Scepter Ministries International

By-Laws / Policies and Procedures

RSMI By-Laws

Article I – Name

- Section 1:** The official incorporated name of the organization shall be Risen Scepter Ministries International
- Section 2:** This name is to be seen as the entity that represents the various servant-hood functions of the body of Christ that are to emanate from this organization through the local church.
- Section 3:** It is intended that Risen Scepter Ministries International is the umbrella organization for several other works that radiate from it according to the will of God. Including, but not limited to, planting churches, establishing training centers, as well as women and children’s ministries on and international level.

Article II – Purpose and Limitations

- Section 1:** *RSMI* was formed under the leading of the Holy Spirit, according to the timing of our Sovereign God, to glorify His name and extend His kingdom and purpose.
- Section 2:** This is to be accomplished on a local level within the ministry, by attending to three distinct areas, those being: corporate worship of the Triune God, training and edification of the body for the work of the ministry, as well as outreach to the unevangelized, and disenfranchised. Along with this, to whomever God would send us, i.e. the “widow” the “stranger” and the “orphan,” to meet not only their spiritual, but also their emotional and physical needs.
- Section 3:** *RSMI*’s primary objective, and process by which we accomplish Section 2 of Article 5, is to train pastors that they might train their people – Secondly, our desire is to bring change for the betterment of people’s lives spiritually, socially, relationally, and physically, with the result that, they in turn bring change to their families, communities, and nations – This is seen as a process of discipleship from governmental ministry to congregational ministry (See Section 4, below), and thereby, to the culture at large.
- Section 4:** Further, *RSMI* does not recognize a clergy/laity separation. Rather we choose to acknowledge instead, that all those in the body are called to minister according to each individual purpose of God for the good of the whole, to His glory. Because of this fact we prefer to see only the distinction of governmental and congregational ministries. While the elders are to exercise servant-leadership over the congregation, the congregation themselves are to function according to the guidelines set out in Scripture in Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (although these lists were not intended to be exhaustive).
- Section 5:** Moreover, *RSMI* will be open and inclusive of all races, genders and groups or persons of varying social-economic levels, and will not distinguish between these for the purpose of discrimination.

The distinguishing mark will be whether or not someone has come to true saving faith in Jesus Christ the Lord, exhibiting the resulting fruit in their lives. If the aforementioned is the case, the person having done this has been baptized by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, and therefore will not be excluded from worship with the congregation of the church. This of course does not intend to infer that only those who claim the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Redeemer will be allowed to attend worship services, or functions of the church. If that were the case, we would not be faithful to proclaim the Gospel to those who do not know Him, not only in the streets, but also within the walls of a physical church building. What the above statement does intend to establish is *RSMI's* belief that without having found salvation and resulting eternal life through God's Son Jesus Christ, no true fellowship can be experienced, seeing that his aforementioned fellowship can only be accomplished by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Section 5: The above being said, *RSMI* reserves the right to exclude any group or individual that although claiming to be a believer, their lives display traits or patterns that do not line up with Scripture as defined and interpreted by the governing and congregational ministries, i.e., those who are rebellious, or preach another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9), those who refuse to be mutually submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and align themselves with the body, and those who are sexually or otherwise immoral, that the purity of apostolic doctrine and holiness might be retained to the Glory of God.

Section 6: *RSMI* is to operate exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the organization shall be used to the benefit of any private individual; and no significant part of the activities of the organization, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above.

Section 7: *RSMI* shall not have or issue shares of stock, and no dividends shall be paid. The ministry is prohibited from lending money to warrant the commitment of a member or governing representative of the ministry. No member or governing representative of the ministry has any vested right, interest or privilege in or to the assets, property, or activities of the ministry. *RSMI* may contract in due course, for reasonable consideration, with its members or governing representatives without violating this provision.

Article III – Dissolution or Sale of Assets

Section 1: Upon the dissolution of Risen Scepter Ministries International, any assets remaining after payment of debts, and other liabilities shall be distributed to other charitable organizations that are exempt under the provision of section 501C(3) of the US IRS Code.

Section 2: No individual or group under the *RSMI* banner of ministries is to benefit personally from the dissolution of assets remaining.

Article IV – Amendments

Section 1: These by-laws may be amended when necessary by a two-third's majority vote by board members

Section 2: Proposed amendments may be submitted to the board during any scheduled meeting or during a special meeting having been called to rectify problems or issues that have arisen

Article V – Church Polity

- Section 1:** *RSMI* and its affiliates are to be an expression of the universal church as founded by its head Jesus Christ the Lord, who is the only true Chief Shepherd, and therefore must retain final and complete authority over the local body through the executive guidance of the Holy Spirit. This entity is not to be a democracy, but a theocracy (God ruled), through His appointed leadership and those that have been gathered by God to declare their fellowship with each individual body.
- Section 2:** Although *RSMI* will align itself through networking with other ministries and local bodies throughout each community, as well as nationally and internationally, it will remain an autonomous organism as believed to be exemplified by the testimony of Scripture. This networking process will be used to make possible mutual submission and accountability with others in the body of Christ, for there is wisdom to be gained from a multitude of counselors (Pr. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6).
- Section 3:** Yet ultimately Jesus Christ, being the Chief Shepherd must be sought in all decision making processes, trusting His direction, through the Holy Spirit, concerning judgments and conclusions on a local level. Moreover each decision is to be made, and further, be in line with the testimony and authority of Scripture, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ imparted through the apostles as a set record of the will of God for faith and practice. By this we have obtained a three-fold witness: The Holy Spirit, the biblical account, and eldership of each individual church. Along with this these determinations must be in line with *RSMI* on the national and international level as determined by the founder/president of the ministry.
- Section 4:** The national structure shall contain the offices of National Director – National Lead Pastor and/or Provincial Lead Pastors depending on the national environment of each particular country. Along with this the national structures shall also be made up of a Board of Elders – Board of Directors – Cluster Coordinators and other positions that may be developed in the future to maintain the flow of information as well as to insure the integrity of the ministry. These national positions will be outlined below.
- Section 5:** The Local structure of the church shall not be hierarchical but shall contain three distinct categories in keeping with the biblical model: Lead Pastor, governing Elders, and Deacons, as well as an additional category, the Board of Trustees, drawn from the congregation to facilitate fiscal responsibility, stewardship, and seasoned business decisions having to do with the growth of each individual church.

Article VI – Doctrinal Oversight

- Section 1:** The first standard to determine doctrine is to be the canon of Scripture when rightly interpreted based upon the correct principles of biblical interpretation
- Section 2:** The second standard to determine doctrine is to be the *RSMI* Statement of Faith that is governed by section one of this article
- Section 3:** *RSMI* sets a high priority on doctrinal purity. Therefore it is important to have safeguards in place that there might be oversight to facilitate the correct adherence of each individual fellowship to the will of God as outlined in the Scripture. This is to protect apostolic doctrine and assure that each individual believer that attends an *RSMI* fellowship is being fitted for the work of the ministry as shown to be necessary according to the Word of God (c.f. Eph 4:11-13)

Section 4: This supervision is to guard over the theology and doctrine that is taught. Therefore *RSMI* requires that all that are part of the *RSMI* family throughout the ministry structure seek ongoing training. The primary vehicle for this will be the *RSMI* Training Centers that are to be established in each country. This organization is to permit the leaders of the individual fellowships to govern their congregation as they see fit, yet reserves the right to determine safe guidelines of Scriptural purity. Additionally it is important and necessary that the leadership of each of those fellowships recognizes that they are responsible to train correctly those that God have placed under their care. This is to provide that believers that attend and *RSMI* fellowship are helped in the area of spiritual discernment as guided by Scripture. To protect against deception and a distortion of the Rule of Faith

Article VII – Meetings

Section 1: The International Board of Directors shall meet no less than quarterly starting on September 1st, or the following Tuesday of each year at 6:30 p.m. or the closest available time depending on individual directors schedules

Section 2: Special meetings may be called by any member of the board on any matter of immediate importance

Article VIII – Criteria for Selection and Position Responsibilities of Board Members

Section 1: The board member must have a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, having experienced regeneration (Ti 3:5) by the Spirit of God – Additionally, they must be seen in their community as a person of integrity and good reputation

Section 2: The board member must completely comprehend and sincerely believe in the Vision and Mission of Risen Scepter Ministries International. Moreover, they must be able to lucidly explain the Vision and Mission when needed

Section 3: The board member must have wisdom concerning financial matters, with a sense of responsibility relating to the spending of donated funds

Section 4: The Board member must be willing to attend and participate in board meetings, not having an agenda that is not in keeping with the spirit of the ministry Vision and Mission

Section 5: The board member must give the highest priority to the overall working of the ministry of *RSMI*, considering the entire organization in the decision making process – Additionally, they must show a desire to work in a way that seeks Spirit led unity with the other board members

Section 6: The board member must be able to recognize the changing needs of the ministry internationally, and from that make suggestions, or adjustments to respond to growth or problems that might arise

Section 7: The board member must be able to fulfill their position effectively – This is to be done by self-assessment and a willingness to grow in their position through positive change

Section 8: The board member must be willing to give financially to the ministry of *RSMI* on a regular basis through seeking the Lord and then following through with obedience

Article IX – Ministry Structure

Section 1: Membership shall consist of only those on the International Board of Directors (IBD), as well as those on the National Board of Directors (NBD) in the governing level of this ministry

Section 2: For membership in the congregational level of this ministry, having to do with the local church, see “Membership” under the heading, “Description and responsibilities concerning local church ministry positions – Governmental and Congregational” in the Policies and Procedures section of this document

Section 3: The ministry structure positions of *RSMI* on the governmental level shall be the following: The International Board of Directors – The International Coordinator – The National Director – The National Lead Pastor – The National Board of Directors – The National Board of Elders – The Cluster Coordinator – The Assistant Cluster Coordinator (If needed)

Section 4: The ministry positions outlined in Section 3 of Article 5 are subject to change or addition if the situation or government of a particular country demands

Section 5: If Section 4 needs to be applied the final approval lies with the International Board of Directors

Sections six through thirteen contain the descriptions and prevailing responsibilities of the five governing positions

Section 6: International Board of Directors (IBD) – Description and Responsibility

1. The IBD shall be made up of President – Secretary – Treasurer and no less than three directors
2. The IBD must first and foremost uphold the integrity of *RSMI* and the name of God
3. It is the responsibility of the IBD to insure that the doctrinal purity is maintained, which is in keeping with the correct interpretation of Scripture and the *RSMI* Statement of Faith – In addition, that the Foundational Documents are honored on an International, National, and Local level
 - a. These documents may be defined as, but not limited to the following group, – Ministry Vision, Mission Statement, Statement of Faith, and By-Laws
 - b. This group may be added to with additional provisions and papers. These additional papers will be required to be honored by all those in the *RSMI* family as was the previous corpus. This obligation is to be based upon notification and disposition of said documents to those under their stipulations
4. The President and the remaining members of the IBD has full authority to amend the Foundational Documents to adjust for ministry expansion or the changing needs of the ministry of RSMI-USA and its international branches
 - a. These amendments must always be in line with the spirit and the intent of the original documents in their entirety
 - b. These amendments are only to be initiated to enhance the effectiveness of the ministry while maintaining Doctrinal and Moral integrity
 - c. Any changes must have prior approval of the Founder and/or President of RSMI-USA and International Board of Directors

5. The IBD reserves the right to overrule any decisions on a National or Local level in its International Branch countries that are not in keeping with the Vision – goals – or the Foundational Documents or RSMI-USA – all national and local entities are subject to this provision

(Note: The following positions may be amended in each country depending on the requirements of the indigenous government to make possible compliance for ministry registrations, yet these offices are to remain the same in principle and function whenever possible)

Section 7: The International Coordinator – Description and Responsibility

1. In some instances, such as Africa, it is necessary to also have the role of International Coordinator
2. This is in the case of a continental situation where there exists more than one country on that particular continent
3. The International Coordinator is not an elected official, but is set in place by the International Board of Directors
4. Additionally the National Director cannot be removed by any action on the part of an individual or group on a national level but only by decision of the International Board
5. The International Coordinator has the ultimate decision making authority concerning the different aspects of their position, and reports only to the Board of Directors of RSMI-USA in the United States
6. This position is responsible for working on an inter-country level concerning the facilitation and operation of *RSMI* between countries
7. The International Coordinator is to assist in the launch of *RSMI* in a new country, to help insure the ministry's policies and procedures are clearly understood and enacted
8. At times the International Coordinator will be required to travel to a particular country to host seminars, and/or work in a relational way with the leaders of that country. Especially in the case of that country being new to *RSMI*
9. It is also important for the International Coordinator to work closely with the positions of National Director and National Lead Pastor, yet the position of International Coordinator is not in authority over the National Director concerning the day to day operation of the ministry in a particular country. However, the National Director and National Lead Pastor are required to follow the guidelines and parameters set by the International Coordinator
10. That being said it will be important to recognize that upon occasion these aforementioned guidelines and parameters might need be adjusted to fit within a particular country's culture, society, and governmental requirements
11. Conversely, the National Director of any particular country is not in authority over the International Coordinator, having to do with the various aspect of the IC's position. Both of these stations are to receive their respective governance from RSMI-USA
12. The position of International Coordinator is to be seen as an ambassador and implementer, safeguarding and overseeing the correct functional operation of *RSMI*, especially in the beginning stages,

of any particular country in the continent. Therefore the position of International Coordinator can be understood as a director on an international level similar to the position of Nation Director on a national level

Section 8: The National Director – Description and Responsibility

1. The National Director is not an elected official but is set in place by the International Board in the USA
2. Additionally the National Director cannot be removed by any action on the part of an individual or group on a national level but only by decision of the aforementioned International Board
3. The National Director has the ultimate decision making authority nationally and reports only to the Board of Directors of RSMI-USA in the United States
4. The International Board of Directors in the United States has the right to hold the National Director accountable to uphold the ministry Vision – Statement of Faith – and By-laws of said ministry along with all deemed Foundational Documents as defined by the Founder/President of the ministry in the USA and the IBD
5. The National Lead Pastor – National Board of Directors and the National Board of Elders report directly to the National Director – These entities therefore are responsible to inform the National Director of those things that are on such a scale so as to effect the overall function or purpose of the ministry in that particular country
6. The National Director retains the right of veto on any decision made on a national or local level that he/she feels is not in line with ministry goals and standards
7. Conversely the National Director must affirm all decisions concerning finances – disciplinary action – future projects – ministry trends – judgments and resolutions that affect the overall operation of the ministry nationally
8. The National Director reserves the right to call a special meeting of the National Board of Directors and/or the National Board of Elders as he/she sees fit if this office has concerns or initiatives that need to be addressed or enacted immediately
 - a. If such a meeting is called it must take place within one week of notice of the meeting
 - b. At such a time if all that are summoned are not able to attend those that are not present must be informed by phone of the subject of the meeting and will be held responsible to initiate any and all decisions that come from the assembly as if they had attended in person
9. The National Director has full authority in every area nationally and on the local level to assure the integrity and reputation of the ministry and ultimately of God's name are upheld on a continuing basis
10. The National Director has power to hold accountable all that serve in any capacity to the tenets of the Foundational Documents
11. The National Director has the right to remove any and all persons or entities that are found to be in violation of ministry standards after having reported said violation to the International Board

and upon receiving approval – Taking any action considered appropriate by ministry standards to guarantee the dignity of the ministry

Section 9: The National Lead Pastor – Description and Responsibility

1. The National Lead Pastor is set in place by the National Director after having received the approval of the International Board of Directors and the President of RSMI-USA
2. The National Lead Pastor is to report directly to the National Director with all issues and questions as well as other information as directed by the National Director or as situations arise on a National and Local level in each individual country
3. RSMI-USA and the National Director has the right to hold the National Lead Pastor accountable to uphold the Ministry Vision – Statement of Faith – and By-laws of said ministry along with all deemed Foundational Documents as defined by the Founder/President of the ministry in the USA, and the IBD
4. The National Lead Pastor reports directly to the National Director – The person that holds this position is responsible to inform the National Director of those things that are on such a scale so as to affect the overall function or purpose of the ministry
5. The National Lead Pastor is responsible to oversee the unity of the ministry in his/her individual country. This means that the position requires the office holder to visit the local *RSMI* branch churches on a regular basis as well as to relay communications from the National Director and RSMI-USA
6. Additionally, the National Lead Pastor is to follow-through by way of giving explanation of the ministry to those groups or individuals who feel that God may be calling them to enter into covenant with *RSMI* as a pastor or church, and thus become part of the *RSMI* family.
 - a. One of the ways that this is accomplished is by holding informal Pastor's Orientation Seminars
 - b. These individuals or churches may be brought to the attention of the National Lead Pastor by the National Director or the President of RSMI-USA.
 - c. Along with this the National Director should then pass on evaluations and suggestions of these meetings to the National Lead Pastor and RSMI-USA as the case may be. These suggestions and evaluations are to be based on the dictates of the foundational documents and the perspective person or groups ability to align themselves with these requirements
7. The National Lead Pastor is to receive the *RSMI* Church Report forms from the Coordinators by the 2nd of each month for the previous month and then file them online with RSMI-USA no later than the 5th of that month so that these reports might be processed and compiled by RSMI-USA and distributed to donors and the International Board
8. The National Lead Pastor is to hold a quarterly meeting with the Cluster Coordinators to discuss the issues and goals of *RSMI*

Section 10: National Board of Directors (NBD) – Description and Responsibility

1. The National Board of Directors must be made up of Chairman – Vice Chairman – Secretary – Treasurer – and no less than three directors

(This provision is subject to the laws of each individual nation in which the ministry is registered)

2. The NBD reports directly to the National Director of each individual country, if that position exists in that country. If this is not the case the NBD reports directly to RSMI-USA
3. The NBD agrees to uphold the Foundational Documents as defined by the Founder and /or President of *RSMI* and the board of RSMI-USA
4. The NBD will be subject to the provisions and decisions of the National Director and/or IBD and RSMI-USA depending on the ministry structure of a particular country
5. The NBD's primary responsibility it to oversee the funds of the ministry and therefore it is expected to maintain the highest standards of fiscal responsibility
6. Considering point five above the NBD must oversee the fiscal integrity of the ministry in all its national and local affiliates
 - a. If these seem to be concerns having to do with the fiscal responsibility of any subsidiary of *RSMI* on a national or local level, the NBD must take steps to investigate.
 - b. In the case where any entity is found to be in violation correct action must be taken to insure the integrity of the ministry
 - c. The NBO must involve not only the BOE and the National Director in this action, but also the IBD so that it is insured that all actions implemented are in keeping with *RSMI* policy
 - d. When situations arise such as outlined above concerning the process of discipline – or when there might be questions concerning the misuse of biblical truth or the Foundational Documents all parties must be involved and must respond appropriately in a timely manner to circumvent the expansion of the concern
7. The NBD is expected to work in cooperation with the NBE – this is especially the case concerning issues with Individual *RSCF* branch churches
8. Guidelines for the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
 - a. The AGM is the vehicle by which the individual *RSCF* branch churches can effect change in the overall functioning of the national ministry.
 - i. During the meeting they are to be informed and offer input concerning the direction of *RSMI*
 - ii. The delegates will be afforded the opportunity to present creative proposals with reference to the path of the ministry as well as presenting thoughts concerning trends and concerns that they might have seen on a local level
 - b. Individual *RSCF* churches will appoint delegates based upon the size of the congregation
 - c. One delegate per each fifty members (or one delegate for a church with less than fifty) will travel to the place of the AGM
 - d. If the delegate allotment for a particular church is one then it is suggested that the Pastor attend
 - e. The expenses incurred for travel and accommodations are to come from each individual church and is not the responsibility of *RSMI* on a regional, national, or international level
 - f. If for some reason a branch church is not able to send a delegate to the AGM they may place a proxy vote – yet is encouraged by RSMI-USA, that each member church send a delegate
9. The terms of service of officers of the NBD
 - a. These positions are subject to a vote every year, of the *RSCF* branch churches, held at the AGM
 - b. The vote tally to effect any change must be at least 4/5 of the delegate attending or by the provision of a proxy vote if a branch church is not able to attend
 - c. If Reinstated they will serve until the AGM reconvenes again the following year

Section 11: The National Board of Elders (NBE) – Description and Responsibility

1. The NBE is not to be a group of elected officials by the process of popular vote but is to be considered a biblical and spiritual position. Therefore the NBE member and office holder is to be appointed by either the National Director or RSMI-USA depending on the situation and ministry structure in a particular country.
2. If the members of the NBE are appointed by the National Director, that person must do the appointment with the full knowledge and approval of the IBD in the USA.
 - a. Both are to seek the Lord for guidance and appoint these members according to His will and purpose for the ministry in that country
 - b. The members of the NBE are to have a deep reverence for God and be fully submitted to His will
 - c. Additionally they are to be proven to have a great breath of knowledge of the Scripture and to be seen as functioning in the principle and guidelines concerning the appointment of elders in the New Testament (c.f. 2 Cor. 1:23, 24; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Ti. 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
3. The NBE reports directly to the National Director and/or RSMI-USA depending on the structure in the country in question and is also to work closely with the NBD
4. The NBE's primary responsibility is to insure that the various leaders and individual RSCF branch churches adhere to the founding documents
5. Additionally, the NBE is to protect the integrity of the ministry and the name of God
6. Moreover the NBE is to preserve and safeguard the teaching of correct doctrine as defined by RSMI-USA
 - a. Because of this responsibility of doctrinal oversight the NBE will conduct regular quarterly visits to the individual churches that the standards of ministry may be maintained and God is glorified
 - b. This visit is to be conducted by at least one of the NBE members if not two and is to be considered a guard over integrity and correct doctrine in each individual church
7. Upon occasion it might be necessary for the NBE to bring disciplinary action against a local pastor or church – and in extreme cases has the authority to remove a pastor or church from fellowship with *RSMI* practicing the principles outlined in this document concerning discipline
 - a. These measures are only to be taken in cases where there is a great lack of moral or fiscal integrity being witnessed and proved
 - b. These measures may also be the result of a flagrant disregard for the precepts found in the Foundation Documents or the teaching of error and having no regard for the clear teaching of Scripture
 - c. This may also occur as a result of dishonoring the ministry and/or the name of God
 - d. If there seems to be a concern having to do with fiscal responsibility it may be necessary to involve the NBD in the process when dealing with the individual entity
8. When situations arise such as outlined concerning the process of discipline – or when there might be questions about the misuse of biblical truth and/or the founding documents the NBE is required to communicate these concerns to the National Director and /or RSMI-USA and that body is to be involved in the decision making process
9. Although the NBE has the authority to bring disciplinary action against a local leader or RSCF branch church – it may only do so with the express permission of the National Director and/or RSMI-USA

Section 12: Cluster Coordinator – Description and Responsibility

1. Groupings of *RSCF* churches in local areas have been termed “clusters” – the Cluster Coordinator is the position responsible for the ongoing care of that grouping of churches
2. The Cluster Coordinator is not to be considered a hierarchical position but rather, primarily a source of unity between the various *RSCF* branch churches in a local area
3. This position reports directly to the National Lead Pastor and is required to contact the National Lead Pastor weekly for communication purposes concerning the day to day operation of the ministry of *RSMI* on a cluster level. This is that they might discuss forward challenges and issues as well as share successes that have occurred the previous week
 - a. This communication may be accomplished by phone or email, the preferred method being the phone to facilitate communication
 - b. This communication is not to be done by texting
4. The Coordinator will be responsible for carrying out the decisions of the NBE and the NBD
5. The Cluster Coordinator is required to bring together the pastors of the churches in their local area on no less than a monthly basis that those pastors might pray together – discuss concerns or what is occurring in their area.
 - a. During these meetings it will be profitable to discuss ideas concerning income and work projects or simply an opportunity to fellowship and pray with other pastors
 - b. This will afford those pastors a sense of connectedness with the other *RSCF* in their area
6. The Cluster Coordinator is required to be in contact with everyone in their cluster on a regular basis – As well as a current copy of each *RSMI* Foundational Document
7. The Cluster Coordinator is responsible for presenting the Pastor’s Orientation Seminar in their area when it seems it is necessary to do so
 - a. This seminar can be presented in a home during a two hour period
 - b. This seminar is mandatory before being set in place as an *RSMI* pastor
8. Additionally the Cluster Coordinator is responsible to watch over
 - a. The adherence to the *RSMI* Foundational Documents
 - b. Doctrinal Purity
 - c. The personal and fiscal moral integrity of leadership in the branch churches
 - d. For the previously existing churches, that the name has been changed to Risen Scepter Christian Fellowship
9. If an individual leader or *RSCF* branch church is found not to be in compliance with above for points, along with any other concerns that might affect the ministry adversely or the name of God, the Cluster Coordinator is responsible to report these concerns to the National Lead Pastor
10. The Cluster Coordinator is responsible to gather the *RSMI* Monthly Church Report forms from the pastors in their respective clusters and file them with the National Lead Pastor no later than the 2nd day of each month for the previous month

11. All Cluster Coordinators are to make themselves available to attend a quarterly meeting that is held by the National Lead Pastor with the Cluster Coordinators to discuss the issues and goals of *RSMI*

Section 13: Assistant Cluster Coordinator – Description and Responsibility

1. When any particular *RSMI* cluster reaches the amount of 10 churches it will become necessary for an Assistant Cluster Coordinator to be assigned. This is so that the efficient management and needs of the cluster may be addressed
2. The Cluster Coordinator, under the advisement of the National Lead Pastor, will assign half of the churches in that particular cluster to the Assistant Coordinator to watch over and guide. Yet the ultimate responsibility for the churches is under the care of the Cluster Coordinator themselves and therefore the Coordinator is to hold the Assistant Coordinator accountable to fulfill their position with the utmost integrity
3. The Assistant Cluster Coordinator is to work closely with, and report to the Cluster Coordinator, who is their immediate superior, concerning any issues that might arise with the churches within their purview insuring that the foundational documents of *RSMI* are understood and adhered to.
4. The Assistant Cluster Coordinator is to help the Coordinator in hosting the required monthly informational cluster meeting in order that a high standard of communication and unity is maintained
5. Further, if the growth of any particular *RSMI* cluster of churches reached 20 then this will be divided into a second cluster
6. In the case of this creation of an additional cluster, it is to be noted that this does not guarantee that the Assistant Coordinator is assured of taking the position of Coordinator over the new cluster
 - a. The assignment of the new coordinator will be achieved on a case by case bases, taking into consideration first and foremost prayer, as well as qualifications and recommendations to find the best candidate for the position
 - b. It is the National Lead Pastor, after seeking the council of NBE – NBD – and the National Director, that makes the decision following the guidelines set by RSMI-USA
 - c. Yet the National Lead Pastor is to seek wisdom having to do with the decision based upon the experience of the Coordinator of the cluster that is being divided, who's firsthand involvement will be of benefit during the selection process
 - d. Ultimately, after the candidate has been selected, they must be finally approved by RSMI-USA

RSMI Policies and Procedures

Pastors – Churches – Schools – Orphanages – and Other Entities

The following are guidelines for inclusion and/or service in the *RSMI* family of ministries

- These must be read and understood carefully
 - The procedures are not suggestions but mandatory principles that will be expected of all those that align themselves with *RSMI*
1. All pastors and individual churches, as well as schools and/or orphanages that feel that they are called to be part of the *RSMI* family must covenant with *RSMI* to uphold the Foundational Documents and the Visions and Goals of the ministry
 - a. This group of Foundational Documents are those as defined by the Founder and President or RSMI-USA
 - b. These documents include, but may not be limited to: The *RSMI* Mission Statement – Ministry Vision – Statement of Faith – and the By-Laws
 2. Every *RSMI* leader is responsible to act at all time with the utmost integrity
 - a. Holding to and teaching sound doctrine as defined by RSMI-USA
 - b. Handling with supreme stewardship and fiscal responsibility the funds that come to each individual church
 - c. Walking at all times according to the biblical standards and God's will with actions that reflects His character and moral uprightness
 - d. *RSMI* leaders are expected to honor and protect the name of the ministry – but most importantly the name of God Himself
 3. Each *RSCF* (Risen Scepter Christian Fellowship) is autonomous yet inter-connected – meaning they have the freedom to worship the way that is comfortable within their culture and are only asked to follow the guidelines covenanted to when becoming part of the *RSMI* family
 4. Yet these individual branch churches, or other *RSMI* entities, are to stay mutually submitted to the other *RSCF* pastors and congregations for fellowship and personal accountability

Provisions Concerning the Use of Funds and Fundraising

5. It is to be understood that there is no guarantee of monies to be provided to individual churches or ministries from *RSMI*, whether that source or entity be RSMI-USA or the national body
 - a. The primary funding of the local body or project is to be garnered by that body through weekly giving and different types of fund drives for special projects
 - b. Additionally, funds may be secured through work projects – cottage industry – and separate income streams including our Micro-Loans for Sustainability Program
 - c. Cases of extreme need will be considered prayerfully by the NBE and the NBD in conjunction with RSMI-USA
 - d. If the need is granted it will be either drawn from a general fund or be collected from the other churches under the *RSMI* umbrella

6. If *RSMI* on a National or International Level is sought to help financially with a special project it is important to follow procedure
 - a. A Ministry Proposal must be submitted to the Cluster Coordinator of the project, explaining in detail the goals and the ministry benefits of said project
 - b. Accompanying the Ministry Proposal must be a budget of the project and a written grant application
 - c. It is to be understood that submission of these documents in no way guarantees the acceptance of them
 - d. If the proposal, budget, and grant application are accepted it may be that the funds that are to be contributed from *RSMI* on a National or International level will have to be raised by seeking donors especially for the project itself.
 - e. Additionally, the acceptance of any particular project may come with certain guidelines, i.e., *RSMI* may require the proposing entity, church, pastor or project, to supply a percentage of the funds, may require repayment of certain monies, or other particulars, including community, or congregational involvement

7. All requests must follow the chain of command
 - a. Under no circumstances are churches, pastors, or entities of *RSMI* allowed to circumvent the chain of command within the ministry structure
 - b. An *RSMI* church, pastor, or entity must apply to the Cluster Coordinator who in turn takes the request to the National Lead Pastor
 - c. The National Lead Pastor then, takes the application under consideration to the proper *RSMI* office or position

Please take particular notice of the following points D-F. They must be followed if any proposal is to be considered

- d. A church, pastor, or entity is never to bring a proposal or personal need directly to any member of the International Board – RSMI-USA or the founder/president
 - e. In the event that this happens the proposal will be rejected
 - f. The only position that is allowed to approach RSMI-USA concerning funds would be the National Lead Pastor or above.

8. Concerning funds donated by individual contributors – whether through the *RSMI* website, by mail, or other means
 - a. It is never allowed for the project or person receiving the funds to have direct communication with the donor – this is for the protection of both parties as well as *RSMI* itself
 - b. Opportunity for communication will be given through letters submitted to an *RSMI* email address and then RSMI-USA will forward the letter to the donor
 - c. The communication from the one that received the funds to the donor must never include requests for additional funds or needs. This is strictly forbidden
 - d. If an email communication submitted, is not within *RSMI* guidelines it will be returned to the church, pastor, entity, or project official that has received the funds for correction and resubmission

9. No *RSMI* pastor or ministry leader is allowed to count donations collected locally by themselves
 - a. Donations must be handled by a group of at least three individuals such as those on a board of trustees
 - b. None of these individuals may be related to the pastor or ministry leader – whether by blood or marriage

10. If an individual *RSCF* branch church deems to use funds acquired from their individual members or from fund raising on a local level, as well as cottage industry – and the decision to use those funds is agreed upon by the Board of Trustees of that local church – they are not only encouraged to but also have the full authority to do so
11. However *RSCF* branch churches do not have the authority to obligate ministry funds in any way beyond their autonomous entities
 - a. One church is not allowed to promise or expect the funds of another church
 - b. Additionally they are not to expect provision from any other part of *RSMI* without receiving prior approval
12. No obligation for the use of funds on an international level (international being defined as those monies that are collected by donations through the Parent Ministry RSMI-USA) may be guaranteed without the express permission or the president or treasurer or the International Board of Directors
13. No obligation for the use of funds on a national level may be guaranteed without the express permission of the Chairman and Treasurer of the NBE

Fund Development Using the Internet or by Any Other Means Which Entails International and/or National Exposure

14. No agent, leader, or individual of RSMI may use the name Risen Scepter Ministries International, RSMI, or any other term that is associated with this ministry to raise funds without first receiving permission in writing from RSMI-USA
 - a. This includes phrases such as, “Planting Churches / Training Leaders” as well as “Expressing the Kingdom of God in the earth”
 - b. Additionally, this includes any and all phrases, mottos, and or names by which the ministry of RSMI is currently identified, or will be identified in the future.
15. No agent, leader, or individual, under the banner of, or involved with RSMI, is allowed to solicit funds over the internet without first receiving permission in writing from RSMI-USA
 - a. This is done to protect the name of the ministry of RSMI internationally against the mishandling of funds while claiming to be a representative of said ministry
 - b. Moreover, this is to insure the transparency of the ministry in all financial transactions and fundraising endeavors
 - c. This policy is also to include those that might use another ministry name or project label to solicit funds, while under the ministry umbrella or RSMI, if in doing so they violate any ethical or financial guidelines of the ministry of RSMI
16. The process for securing this permission is as follows:
 - a. A comprehensive proposal must be submitted detailing the purpose and objectives of the fundraising project
 - b. This proposal must also include any web address, email campaign, or any other means by which the request for funds is being distributed
 - c. Before the letter of permission is issued, the project, fundraising effort, or support, must be approved of by no less than three directors of the IBD (The RSMI-USA International Board of Directors)
17. This policy concerning the solicitation of funds internationally and or nationally, is not meant to include any fundraising effort by a local *RSCF* church or group for a project within their community

- a. This regulation is only intended to govern projects or activities where the outreach or solicitation extends beyond the local community.
 - b. If the activity is limited to the local community in which the representative – agent – or church is located, any RSMI agent, has total freedom to pursue such project
 - c. Yet, that project is to be directed, keeping in mind the policies and procedures as a whole, in all integrity, and adhering to the bookkeeping and accounting processes outlined in the following section
18. RSMI reserves the right to respond, or in any other way discipline an individual, or entity, that violates this policy, even up to, and including, removal of such entity from the ministry of RSMI

Bookkeep and Accounting

19. All donations that come from the west must flow through the RSMI-USA bookkeeping system
- a. RSMI-USA will then send the funds through the US account to the proper recipient
 - b. We are responsible to the US government to prove that the donations have been used correctly
 - c. US charities are required to be audited by an independent agency on a yearly basis
20. Every church, school, orphanage, or other ministry that is connected with *RSMI* must keep accurate records of all fund transactions
- a. This is a requirement whether the funds have been collected from the west or locally
 - b. These records must always be available to be viewed by any *RSMI* official such as Coordinator – or above
 - c. These records must also be available to be seen by any visiting donor from the west so that they might know how their donations has been handled
21. These records must be open and transparent – showing the use of all monies – how they are spent and what is purchased
- a. The records that are keep of foreign donation in a *RSMI* church must match the recorded donation at RSMI-USA
 - b. If the church or ministry in the foreign field, whether Africa or the Philippines is not willing to do this they will no longer receive the benefit of fund raising efforts in the west
22. This must be done in order that we can prove to donors, especially international donors, that we have used the money correctly with the highest integrity
- a. This means that every donation must be accurately recorded
 - b. The records must detail how all funds are used and if spent how the funds are applied
 1. If funds are used to purchase supplies for communion it must be recorded correctly
 2. If funds go toward a special project it must be shown
23. It is mandatory that if a donor contributes funds for a certain project or person this is what the funds are used for
- a. As a ministry *RSMI* is required to apply these funds correctly
 - b. As a ministry we must be able to prove that we have done so
 - c. Therefore all the directives must be followed

Local Ministry Donation to the *RSMI* National Organization

24. One of the goals of *RSMI* is to help its pastors extend their ministry and increase the quality of life for their families and congregations – We do this by working together
25. It is for the above reason we have a system whereby each individual entity has the opportunity to build our corporate ministry for the good of all
26. *RSMI* churches and ministries are required to sow into the national organization in each country from the donations they receive
 - a. This donation to the National *RSMI* organization is done on a sliding scale depending on the churches ability to pay
 - b. For new church plants the amount is 2.5-5% of the donations are to be donated to the national organization depending on the church's situation and is taken on a case by case basis
 - c. For churches existing one year or longer the donation is 10% of donations collected
27. The funds contributed are used for two primary purposes
 - a. To develop and maintain a Pastor's Emergency Fund
 1. This fund is to be used in the case of medical emergencies – hardships – natural disasters – or other traumas
 2. The disbursement of these funds are determined by the BOE the National Director, and the National Lead Pastor, with the consent of RSMI-USA
 3. If there is not a BOE in place in the particular country, the use of the funds is determined by the National Director and the National Lead Pastor, with the consent of RSMI-USA
 - b. The second use of the funds is they are to be applied to the administrative needs of the ministry nationally – some of the ways the funds are applied are the following
 1. Printing for outreaches, baptism cards, pastor's ID, etc.
 2. Pastor's Orientation and training seminars
 3. Evangelistic endeavors such as revivals to reach the lost
 4. Assistance in church planting
 5. Training materials for individual churches
 6. Travel expenses for *RSMI* leaders when used in the exercise of their office (Strict guidelines are to be in place in each country concerning the use of funds and each expenditure must be appropriate applied and accurate records are to be kept)

(It is to be noted that the above list may not is simply some of the ways that the funds might be used for administrative costs – yet these funds will never be used for the personal enrichment of any one person that is in the *RSMI* ministry structure. If it is found that someone within our structure, on any level, misappropriates funds, they will be dealt with through the proper authorities in the country in which the event occurs.)
 - c. The division of the funds that are collected from the individual churches and ministries of *RSMI* are to be divided in the following way
 1. 60% of the money collected is to go toward the Pastor's Emergency Fund
 2. 40% is to go toward administrative costs
 - d. The bookkeeping system for these funds is to be transparent
 1. A yearly report is to be provided for all contributors detailing how the funds have been used
 2. Additionally, the records of transactions concerning these funds are to be made available upon request within a reasonable period of the date of the request, to any contributor
 - i. This period is not to exceed two weeks
 - ii. Requests made from a member of a congregation must come through the pastor to the Cluster Coordinator to the National Lead Pastor – therefore following the chain of command

Church Reporting System

28. *RSMI* churches are required to file a monthly report based upon the *RSMI* Church Report Form – This report contains such information as the following...
 - a. Weekly Attendance: Divided into age groups of Adults – Teens - Children
 - b. Weekly Collection
 - c. Salvations
 - d. Baptisms
 - e. Any Special Events such as outreaches or revivals
 - f. Stories of Successes
 - g. Difficulties Encountered
29. The figures in the *RSMI* Church Report are to be gathered on a weekly basis and compiled in a simple monthly report which is given to the Cluster Coordinator
30. The Cluster Coordinator is to file the *RSMI* Church Reports with the National Lead Pastor who files the reports with RSMI-USA
31. These reports are highly valuable in that they provide a measure of what the Lord is doing in the ministry
32. Additionally, these reports are to be used in concert with the Adopt-A-Pastor program
 - a. When a pastor enters the *RSMI* Adopt-A-Pastor Program after one year trial service with *RSMI* The Church Report system will provide a history of that pastor's ministry which can be made available to potential donors
 - b. Moreover, when the pastor is matched with a monthly donor or donors the ongoing Church Reports will be provided to the donor for a gauge on the ministry activity of the pastor's church
33. The *RSMI* Church Report form is due to be turned in to the Cluster Coordinator no later than the last day of each month.
 - a. The preferred method is through an email attachment
 - b. If email is not possible the pastor is responsible to make sure that the Cluster Coordinator receives the report.
 - c. It is not the Cluster Coordinator's responsibility but the pastor's to make sure that this is done
34. Lastly, these reports must be legible, therefore if they are not typed using a computer (the best way) they must be hand printed, not written, so that they are understood, and opportunities for mistakes are reduced

Concerning Training and Training Materials

35. *RSMI* does expect pastors of individual churches to submit to training – whether biblical or *otherwise* so that they may be effective in their positions to the glory of God and the care of His people which are His own special treasure
36. *RSMI* will provide for theological and biblical training through its Training Centers at no charge as they become available – This resource will be at no cost (Other than a yearly application fee) for *RSMI* pastors alone

- a. If a training candidate is not currently serving in the capacity as a functioning pastor they will be expected to attend an *RSMI* Training Center where they will attend weekly classes being free on the weekend if they wish to travel to their home church for fellowship and service
 - b. If a training candidate is currently serving in the position as a pastor they will be allowed to take *RSMI* Training Center courses by attending a class that will meet monthly where they will discuss previous assignments and course studies. During this monthly meeting they will also be given assignments for the next monthly class
 - c. This will facilitate the pastor having the opportunity to continue with their studies while fulfilling their obligations to their church and families
37. From time to time *RSMI* may provide materials when they become available for the benefit and training of God's leaders and God's people
- a. These materials are to be considered proprietary and the sole property of RSMI-USA and therefore these materials are never to be shared or copied for an individual or ministry that is not within the *RSMI* family
 - b. Additionally, any proprietary materials may not be copied without the express permission of RSMI-USA
 - c. This request for reproduction of materials must be stated in written form with the reason for said request and sent as an attachment in an email to RSMI-USA for due consideration
 - d. If for some reason the individual leader or pastor – as well as a *RSCF* church does not continue in fellowship with *RSMI*, these materials must be returned immediately

Concerning the Name of *RSMI* Churches

38. Pastors of and existing churches that come under the RSMI-USA umbrella and therefore become part of the *RSMI* family will be expected to adopt the title ***RISEN SCEPTER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP*** as the name of their church
- a. This is to enhance unity as well as insure that each individual fellowship is willing to declare their alignment with the ministry vision and goals
 - b. This change of name is **non-negotiable** and is to protect from those that might desire to receive the benefits of a free theological education or assistance, without truly becoming part of the *RSMI* family

Concerning Previous Registration under a Different Name

39. The following is the provision for those churches that may come to *RSMI* although currently registered under a different ministry name
- a. A church that has a previous ministry registration is given a period of up to the yearly registration for the old name under
 - b. At the time that this yearly registration under the old name occurs the church will be expected to relinquish the old registration and come under the *RSMI* banner, adapting the name Risen Scepter Christian Fellowship
 - c. During the course of this trial period the church must announce and post its affiliation with Risen Scepter Ministries International
 - d. When a church that has a previous registration expresses the desire to come into fellowship with the *RSMI* family of churches they must supply the yearly date of their previous registration
 1. This date will be recorded by *RSMI* national and RSMI-USA
 2. When the date of the annual renewal comes the church will be expected to relinquish the registration and adopt the name Risen Scepter Christian Fellowship

3. In the event that the church chooses not to adopt the name mentioned in point number two, that church will no longer be considered part of the *RSMI* family
40. Additionally if this church plants any added churches during this period they are required to name them Risen Scepter Christian Fellowship upon the planting, regardless of the other registration
 - a. This newly planted church will be considered at that time, part of the *RSMI* family
 - b. If the mother church chooses not to change their name to Risen Scepter Christian Fellowship at the annual renewal date of the previous registration, the churches planted during that trial period will be given the opportunity to choose whether they remain as part of the Risen Scepter Ministries International family, or retain the identity of the mother church
 - c. Moreover, If the newly planted church wishes to maintain their affiliation with *RSMI* they will be considered a *RSMI* church as long as they adhere to the foundational documents and the other requirements of RSMI-USA

Quarterly Visits

41. *RSCF* churches and pastors, when new to the *RSMI* family are to recognize that the NBE will conduct quarterly visits to their facility to insure that the ministry standards are maintained
 - a. This is to include correct doctrine and adherence to the Foundational Documents
 - b. Additionally, this includes fiscal responsibility
 - c. As the length of time increases that a church and pastor have been part of the *RSMI* family the frequency of the visits will decrease as long as no incidents occur
 - d. If a pastor has attended and completed a course of study at an *RSMI* training center and holds faithfully to those things they have been taught they will be considered equipped to train their congregation

One Year Trial Period

42. There will be an initial period of one year for each pastor and church that comes under the banner of *RSMI* where the individual entity will be considered a member on an trial basis. This is not to say that there will be less rights and privileges than a member than has been with *RSMI* longer for a longer period of time
 - a. This trial period is to assure both the individual entity and *RSMI* that they are called by God to the purpose and vision of the ministry of Risen Scepter or the teaching of correct doctrine (all these as outlined by RSMI-USA)
 - b. If during that period there are any concerns as mentioned earlier having to do with integrity or faithfulness to morality – fiscal responsibility – adherence to the Foundational Documents – *RSMI* may choose to no longer continue in relationship with that party or entity
 - c. However the opposite is also true – If during the trial period the individual or church entity feels that the Lord is leading them to another area of service *RSMI* will be thankful for that persons faithful service to the kingdom of God and pray that the Lord would bless the work of their hands to His glory

Warning System to Deal with Incorrect Behavior or Integrity Issues

43. If an *RSCF* pastor or other leader is found by the Cluster Coordinator or the NBE to be out of agreement with ministry standards adjustments will be pursued to bring that pastor or leader back into position
 - a. This might be an issue concerning the Foundational Documents – Doctrinal Truths – Fiscal Responsibility – or Moral Integrity

- b. The individual will be required to respond immediately
- c. The governing body is required to give no more than two warnings with a space of two weeks between each
- d. If the issue continues to the time of two weeks past the second warning the governing body is required by RSMI-USA to take action
- e. Furthermore, If the concern is about an individual pastor or leader – and the person has not responded to the action of the Cluster Coordinator or the NBE in an *RSMI* planted church – that individual will be removed and another one installed
- f. Moreover, if the issue is concerning an *RSCF* church it may be necessary to remove them from fellowship with *RSMI* churches and therefore they will no longer be allowed to continue under the *RSMI* umbrella
- g. Considering the above action being taken, the individual leader and/or dis-fellowshipped church is expected to return any and all proprietary RSMI-USA materials that they might have in their possession

Issues Specific to Ordination

1. *RSMI* takes pastoral ordination very seriously. Those that are ordained by this ministry are held to the highest standards of integrity
2. No pastor will be ordained without having attended the Pastor's Orientation Seminar (This seminar is also a requirement of those graduating from *RSMI* Training Centers)
 - a. During this seminar the pastor will be given the opportunity to learn about *RSMI* and what to expect from being part of this ministry
 - b. Foundational Documents
 - i. Statement of Faith
 - ii. Mission Statement
 - iii. Vision
 - iv. By-Laws / Policies & Procedures
 - c. *RSMI* Programs
 - i. Training Centers
 - ii. Adopt-A-Pastor Program
 - iii. Schools and Orphans Program
 - iv. Schools and Orphans Program
 - v. One Child at a Time Program
 - vi. Micro Loans for Sustainability Program
 - d. Explain the Expectations Concerning Funds – Pastor Trial Period, etc.
 - e. At this meeting each applicant must fill out the Application for Ordination and the Pastor's Covenant
3. As noted above in point 37, after ordination there will be a trial period of one year for all *RSMI* pastors
 - a. At the end of this trial period, and if the pastor is in good-standing, having complied with all necessary requirements found in the Foundational Documents The pastor may then apply for permanent status with *RSMI*
 - b. This is accomplished by filling out the form that can be obtained from the Cluster Coordinator
 - c. The Cluster Coordinator must also approve the application before it is submitted to the National Lead Pastor
 - d. At this time the pastor will be prayed for and welcomed in with full status
 - e. This is when the pastor has the opportunity to be placed in the *RSMI* Adopt-A-Pastor Program and is featured on the ministry's international website with their biography and information

Rescinding of Authority and Ordination

4. At any time at the sole decision of *RSMI* or the pastor themselves, the ordination can be withdrawn making them no longer a part of this ministry
 - a. If this is done on the part of the leadership of *RSMI* it will occur because of things such as actions not in keeping with the standards outlined in our Foundational Documents
 - b. *RSMI* will use the Warning System outlined above giving the pastor, or ministry an opportunity to repent and change their direction – Yet if the pastor or ministry refuses to comply *RSMI* will have no other alternative than to remove the pastor/ministry from fellowship with this ministry.
 - c. Some possible reasons for dismissal
 - i. Integrity issues
 - ii. Mishandling of funds
 - iii. Teaching wrong doctrine
 - iv. Refusing to follow the ministry chain of command
 - v. Refusing to honor ministry leadership
 - vi. Dishonoring the name of the ministry
 - vii. Dishonoring the name of God
 - d. In some extreme cases the founder/president of *RSMI* reserves the authority to remove someone from the ministry with no prior warning – either by his own action or someone duly approved by him
 - e. A pastor or ministry might choose to no longer associate with *RSMI* – It should only be understood that they should only do this confidently knowing that they have been released from this ministry by the Lord. If this is not the case they will be in violation before God for having broken the covenant they agreed to on the Pastor's Covenant document
5. Finally, if a pastor or ministry has been removed from association with *RSMI* and yet continues to use the ministry name, or claim to represent the ministry, *RSMI* will report this person to the local authorities in an effort to protect the ministry that the Lord has entrusted to us
 - a. If either a pastor chooses to disassociate themselves or *RSMI* decides that it is in the best interest of the ministry and all concerned, that the pastor or ministry is no longer associated with *RSMI* a Revocation of Ministry Authority notice is to be filled out
 - b. This Revocation of Ministry Authority notice is to serve as the official *RSMI* communication announcing that the ministry has severed ties with the pastor or ministry named in the notice
 - c. From the dating on the notice the pastor or ministry is no longer allowed to use the name of the ministry, nor do actions under the name.
- d. Therefore the pastor or ministry named in the notice will be acting solely on their own and government officials in the entities country will be brought into play if there is any infringement

Provision Concerning the Use of Photos and Documents

1. It is to be recognized that any or all photos or documents supplied to *RSMI* from any of its branches or subsidiaries, as well as that of someone or any entity that is endeavoring to become part of this ministry, become the sole property of Risen Scepter and may be used on the ministry's website and/or promotional materials
2. Any and all photos that are taken during a *RSMI* missions trip by a duly appointed international representative of Risen Scepter, are the sole property of this ministry and may be used on the ministry's website and/or promotional materials

3. All testimonies, biographies, stories, and any or all documentation that is collected, received, or supplied by any entity and/or duly appointed representative of *RSMI* may be used at this ministry's discretion and become the sole property of Risen Scepter
4. Any photos taken or documents collected by a national representative of *RSMI* during a visit or trip become the sole property of Risen Scepter and may be used at this ministry's discretion on the ministry's website and/or promotional materials

Provisions for Seminars and Engagements Nationally or Internationally

1. The Seminar Checklist Form must be adhered to as a guide for establishing all seminars and engagements
2. Budgets for seminars and speaking engagements must be determined prior to the event giving enough time for preparation
3. When this budget is determined *RSMI* will not be responsible for any additional costs incurred during the course of the event
 - a. If the seminar is on a national level the budget must have the prior approval of the NBD
 - b. If the seminar is to be held on an international level – meaning that the speaker or speakers will be invited from outside the host country – it must have the prior approval of the IBD
4. No funds or monies will be guaranteed by *RSMI* without the proper procedure having been followed and not having received prior approval of the appropriate governing body

The following are description and responsibilities concerning local church ministry positions – Governmental and Congregational

The Local Lead Pastor

1 Tim. 3:2-7

They must be “**above reproach**, the husband of but **one wife**, **temperate**, **self-controlled**, **respectable**, **hospitable**, **able to teach**, **not given to drunkenness**, **not violent but gentle**, **not quarrelsome**, **not a lover of money**.”

4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) **6 He must not be a recent convert**, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. **7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders**, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.” NIV

1. The Lead Pastor is to be lead servant, first to the Lord in personal relationship and then to His body through servant ministry. This office is to fulfill completely the qualifications for eldership outlined in Scripture (2 Cor. 1:23, 24; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Ti. 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). We find a biblical model for the lead pastor in James, the Bishop/Pastor of the Jerusalem church. His decision making capability is exhibited in Acts 15 where the account of the first ecumenical council is displayed (particularly shown in verses 13-21).

The lead pastor is to be recognized and set apart or sent out by the existing elders of the other *RSMI* churches, or the Apostle/Bishop. This office is to be of indefinite duration, being changed only by the choice of the Lead Pastor himself or by the leadership and the congregation as outlined in the section on church discipline, Article Seven, under the heading Lead Pastor, points 1-4.

2. Although the Lead Pastor is to have final decision making authority, having received the fullest accountability before God concerning the congregation on a local level, he is not to dominate, nor be dominated by the other elders, nor by any that have been placed by God in a leadership position. Rather he is to seek spiritual counsel, from the other elders, as well as guidance in the areas of finance and business matters from the Board of Trustees. Therefore he or she is to make decisions in unity and concert with the other governmental leaders in the body.
3. The Lead Pastor should be allowed to function as lead under-shepherd, maintaining Spirit-led order by the will of God. Yet this office is not to exercise total control over the elders, deacons, board of trustees, nor anyone in the congregation. This relationship is to be symbiotic, meaning that the Lead pastor must be mutually submitted to the other governing leaders of the body as well as submitted to the Lord. Moreover there is to be an attitude of mutual submission between the governing parties of *RSMI* and its local representations, Risen Scepter Christian Fellowships, recognizing that all in leadership are capable of error and that it is only by the grace of God and the anointing of His Spirit that they are able to operate in their position.
4. This office is to be first on the local level in maintaining the integrity of the word, and purity of doctrine; teaching, preaching, and training up those that God has given him/her. They are to be set before the congregation as guardian of their souls (Heb. 13:17), instilling within them a reverence for God and submission to the Lordship of Christ Jesus.
5. The Lead Pastor is required to maintain a life of worship, personally and congregationally; a life of study that he might present well founded, and in-depth insights from God's inspired Scripture, and a life of prayer, that not only his personal relationship is in order, but that his personal relationship will overflow in God's present truth and will for the congregation at any given time.
6. Finally, the Lead Pastor must always consider those outside the walls of the church that have need. Although the requirements of congregational ministry and pastoral care must be foremost in his service before God, he is to insure that the church allocate ministries, services, and funds toward the lost, the poor, and all those in need, expressing the heart of Jesus Christ to the world at large.

The Pastor/Elders

1. The Pastor/Elders are to be selected and set in place by the Lead Pastor, and any existing pastor/elders, approved of by the body according to the guidelines shown in Scripture.

They are to act as Pastors, Shepherds, or Overseers based upon 1 Tim. 3:1-7. These requirements set forth in this passage (see Local Lead Pastor – Above point one) are to be seen as mandatory for all governmental leadership including, National Lead Pastor, Board of Elders, Local Lead Pastor and all Pastor/Elders.

2. The Pastor/Elders are to advise the Lead Pastor concerning spiritual matters. Because of this they are required to have a strong personal walk with the Lord, including a consistent prayer life and unswerving personal study of the word.
3. It is a prerequisite to the office that they have had ample time to grow to a place of Christian maturity (1 Tim. 3:6), exhibiting faithfulness and dependability concerning the humble placements that God uses to train us, having been active in a ministry of the church (Rom. 12:4, 8).
4. They must have attended church services on a regular basis (Heb. 10:25) in our local body, unless having been brought in by the Lead Pastor and other existing Pastor/Elders under the direction of the Holy Spirit, being also affirmed (acknowledged) by the congregation of the local believers their selves. (It is to be noted that the congregation does not “elect” a person to the role of eldership, but only confirm what the Lord has done through the governing body. Yet if there is a general concern over the decision, the body, by a 2/3s vote may stall and/or stop the installation process until further seeking of the Lord is accomplished. This is not to say that the congregation has the power to elect and install. If this were the case the process would be out of line with the testimony of Scripture.
5. The Pastor/Elder or Pastor/Elders will be set in place before the congregation by prayer and the laying on of hands by the Lead Pastor and other elders if existing, as well as the Apostle/Bishop if available.
6. An Pastor/Elder must be faithful to seek the Lord concerning the correct amount to give to support the church financially (2 Cor. Chaps. 8-9), and have shown a willingness to do so on a consistent basis.
7. The Pastor/Elder must be in agreement with the apostolic doctrine of the church (Amos 3:3; Jude 1:3), as well as the articles of this document. No one with a contrary or divisive spirit and attitude will be allowed to hold a governing position in the ministry of *RSMI* and its local affiliates.

RSMI holds that a divisive attitude brings destruction to the Body of Christ, yet this ministry must allow for reasoned dialog and decent, and will do so. Therefore wisdom and counsel must be sought of leadership and the Holy Spirit in each specific case concerning any issue to determine whether it is reasoned decent for which the will of God must be found, or divisiveness which must be halted before greater damage ensues. The Lord does at times work through reasoned decent to bring forth His will. This process to divide between reasoned decent and divisiveness is to be applied on all levels in every situation to those in a position of government/ministry.

8. The Pastor/Elder is to have pastoral care and training responsibilities including, but not limited to, teaching of Scripture, prayer for those in need, visitation of those in prison or in medical facilities, guidance of the leadership of the various small group ministries, as well as what other things might be required by the Lead Pastor or the demands of ministry in the process of shepherding the people of God. The Pastor/Elder is also to be allowed to teach and train congregationally on a regular basis by rotation is. The Lead Pastor is to recognize the right as given by this document and therefore must yield the pulpit by rotation if possible to other teaching Pastor/Elders in the body. *RSMI* recognized the biblical mandate for an elder to be able to teach and believes that is not only speaking of the ability to do so but the opportunity as well.
9. This office of Pastor/Elder is to be of indefinite duration, being changed only by the choice of the Pastor/Elder themselves or by the leadership and the congregation as outlined in the section on church discipline, Article Seven, under the heading “Pastor/Elder,” points 1-4.

The Deacons

1. There are two primary ministry offices in the New Testament Church, that of confidence we see function in the local body today (this is not to say that *RSMI* denies the existence and operation of the many other biblical giftings for the building up and function of the body); the office of Pastor, which can be understood as interchangeable with elder, overseer, and shepherd (as mentioned above), and the office of Deacon. Deacons are the hands of the pastor leaders to affect the practical work of the ministry to the body of Christ. This office is to be fulfilled according to the guidelines found in 1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13. A Deacon must have spiritual discernment and wisdom (Acts 6:3) having declared their fellowship before the congregation. They must have shown consistency, integrity, and faithfulness to the Lord in their personal lives as well as in their interactions with the church body generally.

2. The Deacons are to be selected according to the guidelines of Scripture enumerated above. In this process the Lead Pastor, or an Pastor/Elder should prayerfully recognize that a particular person displays the traits and giftings required of the office of Deacon (male or female). If this person is suggested by a Pastor/Elder, they are to bring notice of the person to the Lead Pastor. After prayer, the person acknowledged should be approached, and if they are willing to accept the office they should be presented to the congregation

at the annual meeting of the general church. It is here that they will be selected by a 2/3s vote of those in attendance who have declared their fellowship. They are then to be installed into their position before the congregation by prayer and the laying on of hands through the eldership ministry of the church (Acts 6:6), during a Sunday morning worship service. If in between an annual meeting, a Deacon may be installed on a temporary basis and recognized before the congregation until the vote at the next annual meeting.

3. A Deacon must be faithful to seek the Lord concerning the correct amount to give to support the church financially (2 Cor. Chaps. 8-9), and have shown a willingness to do so on a consistent basis.

4. The Deacon shall, to the best of their ability and resources; meet the needs of the people in practical areas considering the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Along with this they are required to minister in physical ways to the many new classes we find emerging in our society, i.e., the single parent, the divorced, and all those in the congregation (as well as more broadly in the community) that have need. Although the validity of the need must be determined by the guidelines declared in point 5.

5. This office is to be submitted to the Pastor/Elders and the Lead Pastor. If, for example, there is an area of need that seems to be apparent within the church family, yet through spiritual discernment as led by the Holy Spirit, or observation of life patterns, it is determined that this area of need has been caused by sin or rebellion, the sin principle must be dealt with and/or addressed before the practical need may be answered. Ultimately this must be determined by the governmental eldership. This is to ensure that no entity of the church interrupt the work of God in someone's life, nor facilitate the continuance of sin.

6. Ultimately, this office, as body ministry and outreach grows, is to facilitate and assist the eldership, that they might give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4).

7. This office of Deacon is to be of indefinite duration, being changed only by the choice of the Deacon themselves or by the leadership as outlined in the section on church discipline, Article Seven, under the heading "Deacon," points 1-2.

Board of Trustees

- 1 The Board of Trustees shall be comprised of a count of three trustees, or a maximum of five and is an entity formed to hold in trust all deeds to church property, to care for and maintain all church property, and to attend to all legal matters related to the above.
- 2 Church property is to be defined as land, building, easements, and fixed assets. This includes, but is not limited to computers, copy machines, sound equipment, vehicles, etc., which have 100.00 or more in value.
- 3 The Board of Trustees shall:
 - a) Act of behalf of the congregation in areas involving the buying, selling, mortgaging, renting or leasing of real property
 - b) Oversee the care and upkeep of all Church property including necessary utilities, improvements, repairs, minor alterations, and general maintenance, with the delegation of responsibilities as required.
 - c) Maintain adequate property and liability insurance coverage for all Church property and facilities if available.
 - d) Provide input to the Pastor/Elders and Lead Pastor relative to planning for future expenditures on property and facilities.
 - e) Determine, in conjunction with the Pastor/Elders, the salaries of the Lead Pastor and other paid staff positions if any exist.
 - f) Maintain a working budget for church management in cooperation with the Pastor/Elders, subject to the approval of the Lead Pastor.
- 4 Procedures for the conduct of Trustee business shall be as determined by that Board. A Chairman shall be selected by the Board of Trustees. The Chairman's responsibilities are to oversee meetings and to act as spokesman for the Board to the body at large, the Elders, and others as appropriate.
- 5 The Board of Trustees shall be accountable to the Pastor/Elders and to those who have declared their fellowship with the local church, and are to bring their suggestions and decisions before the body after having submitted them to the governmental leadership of the church.
- 6 The Board of Trustees shall meet as and when necessary to conduct its business. Meetings shall be called by the Chairman who will individually contact members of the Board and, when possible, announce such meetings on the Sunday morning prior to the meeting. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the elected trustees and this quorum shall be necessary for the transaction of business and the expenditure of funds, except for emergency situations. In such emergency situations where a meeting of the Board of Trustees is not possible, one Trustee in conjunction with one Pastor/Elder will be authorized to conduct business in the best interest of the Church.
- 7 The same qualifications and selection process as delineated above for the office of deacon is to be used for each person that is to sit on the Board of Trustees, with the primary qualification being, that one selected to the board is a mature Christian, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, having a good reputation, with the church and the community at large, having exhibited a fiscal responsibility and clear decision-making ability.
- 8 This office is to be submitted to the Pastoral/Eldership of the church and be under mutual submission to the body of Christ that is gathered together in this local expression of Christ's church.

- 9 A board member must be faithful to seek the Lord concerning the correct amount to give to support the church financially (2 Cor. Chaps. 8-9), and have shown a willingness to do so on a consistent basis.
- 10 An officer of the Board of Trustees is to be elected by a 2/3s vote of people in attendance at the annual business meeting and is to serve a term of one year, where they must submit their desire for repositioning on the board. Yet an officer is not allowed to remain in his or her position for a period of more than 5 years.
- 11 Any discipline seemed necessary for one that is placed on the Board of Trustees is to be outlined under the general heading, "The Body" in the article on church discipline.

Church Discipline

1. The primary purpose of church discipline is to deal with sin among the members of the body of Christ. Although the exercise of this discipline has been practiced for centuries by Church leaders and those involved in congregational ministries of the Church, we live in an age where this practice has become unpopular. The reason for this unpopularity is our being in a society increasing lenient on behavior that the Bible defines as immoral. This belief has infiltrated the Church and can be witnessed in the liberal realm of denominationalism, where morality is determined by the demands of a current social order, therefore expecting the word of God to be conformed to the whims of society rather than the society being conformed to the will of a holy God.
2. It is RSMI's position that we are obligated to hold to the biblical account which reveals the will of our Sovereign Creator and Father God, over any particular society, for social order in general is in constant flux, whereas Jesus Christ is the same, "yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8)."
3. As outlined above, the primary purpose of church discipline is to deal with the issue of sin. Sin encumbers and inhibits fellowship with one another and with God Himself. This effecting of Church discipline can be seen in two distinct areas, restoration of the wrongdoer to correct behavior, and also reconciliation between believers. Not to mention the much needed reconciliation with God, who ultimately all sin is against.
4. Church discipline is to be seen as an act of love. In Hebrews 12:6 we find the statement, "for those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines." In His discourse to the 7 churches of Revelation, the Lord Jesus Himself declares, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:19, NASB)." Further, the objective of church discipline must always be for the good of the body, the good of the individual believer, and to the glory of God.

The Three-fold purpose of Church Discipline

There are three primary goals of church discipline:

- The restoration and reconciliation of the one being disciplined
- To stop the spreading of sin to others
- To guard the wholesomeness of the Church and the honor of the name of God and of His Son

(Basic outline taken from Systematic Theology – Wayne Grudem, see end note)

Restoration and Reconciliation

Risen Scepter Ministries International
Planting Churches / Training Leaders
Expressing the Kingdom of God in the Earth

1. Sin not only hinders our fellowship with God, but also with one another within the body of Christ. If that sin is allowed to continue restoration is impossible. The person that has been found in sin must be restored to right behavior, as well as reconciled in relationship to God and their fellow believer. This discipline depicts the love of our Heavenly Father toward us (Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19). This means that church discipline is the follow-thru of godly concern, based upon biblical principles, portraying the love of God for those He has created and called. In Galatians 6:1 the apostle Paul showed us the kindness by which we are to work toward the restoration and reconciliation of a fellow believer. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently (NIV)." This verse shows us the care and concern we are to have for one caught in sin.
2. The process of discipline is seen in Matthew eighteen

Mt 18:15-17

15 (step one) "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 (step two) But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 (step three) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

NIV

If the discipline accomplishing restoration and reconciliation bears fruit at the first step, there certainly would be no need to continue on to steps two, or finally three. James tells us that when we take part in turning a sinner back from the error of their way we are saving them from death

Jas 5:19-20

19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

NIV

3. If the third step in the process (exclusion from fellowship, or communion with the church) seems necessary because the sin has not been repented of, it must still be the hope that the result of this action would be the restoration of the person, and the reconciliation of relationship with God and fellow believer

To keep sin from becoming leaven throughout the local body or more broadly

1. We must always hope and believe for the restoration and reconciliation of the person in a state of sin, yet this may not always be the case. Ultimately, whether this is accomplished or not, a secondary concern is to guard against the multiplying of sin to a wider context, namely more people. The apostle Paul spoke of how "a little leaven leavens the whole lump (NASB)."
2. We must not allow the sin of one to affect the whole local gathering of believers. Unrepentant sin must be dealt with decisively.

In his instruction to his son in the Lord, Timothy, the apostle exhorted that it was important to rebuke elders publicly in order that "...others may take warning (NIV)."

To guard over the wholesomeness of the body of Christ and to respect the name of Christ Himself, by

which they have been called

1. The purity of the church must be shielded that Christ would be magnified and the world that hates Him anyway, is not given is not given any viable leverage. When believers fall into sin, or are exposed for a lack of integrity or worse, the Lord is greatly dishonored.

Ro 2:23-24

23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

NIV

2. Because the Corinthians had not dealt with sin within their flock they received a sharp admonishment from Paul, because the action and sin of the one who had not been disciplined was known publicly. The apostle was astounded that they had not been "filled with grief and have put out of fellowship the man who did this (1 Cor. 5:2 NIV)." The Church is to be found "...without stain or wrinkle, or any blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:27 NIV)."

For what sins should Church discipline be exacted?

1. We can see from the Matthew passage (Mt. 18:15-20) that the situation progresses from a very private situation between two individuals, to a very public forum if the first steps do not yield the desired result (this of course depending on the hardness of the individual offender).
2. Wayne Grudem has this to say of the testimony of Scripture having to do with sin...

"...there does not seem to be any explicit limitation specified for the kinds of sin that should be subject to church discipline. The examples of sins subject to church discipline in the New Testament are extremely diverse: divisiveness (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10), incest (1 Cor. 5:1), laziness and refusing to work (2 Thess. 3:6-10), disobeying what Paul writes (2 Thess. 3:14-15), blasphemy (1 Tim. 1:20), and teaching heretical doctrine (2 John 10-11). Nonetheless, a definite principle appears to be at work: all sins that were explicitly disciplined in the New Testament were publicly known or outwardly evident sins, and many of them had continued over a period of time."

Grudem goes on to say...

"The fact that the sins were publicly known meant that reproach was being brought on the church, Christ was being dishonored, and there was a real possibility that others would be encouraged to follow the wrongful patterns of life that were being publicly tolerated."

How are church leaders to be disciplined?

1. We have specific instructions from Paul.
2. This process of discipline toward an elder (pastor, shepherd, bishop, overseer) was to insulate them from false accusations or personal, unfounded, assault. Yet, if the accusation is found to be true and the one accused continues in sin, they are to be rebuked in front of the entire congregation. A leader's sin can have an effect upon inestimable proportion of a multitude of people, and bring great shame to Christ.

1 Ti 5:19-21

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. 21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

NASU

3. Because of the public nature of the rebuke it would follow that there must be some type of stating of the offence. Not only will this assure that leadership will not try to shield the offender, but that it will be dealt with correctly. This action will discourage others from entering in to incorrect behavior that might also be publicly disclosed. This maintains the uprightness and purity of the local body's expression of Christ

If the person who has fallen into sin does truly repent of their behavior, meaning being remorseful over the sin not the consequences only, forgiveness should be displayed.

Paul states:

2Co 2:6-8

6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

NASU

4. Finally, the discipline must be exacted in a gentle and loving manner. The humility of those that carry out the discipline must be evident.

Gal 6:1

A Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

NASU

Directly following the Matthew passage (18:15-20) on discipline the Lord points to the fact that we are all responsible to forgive those who have sinned against us (Matt. 18:21-35), no matter how grievous the sin. When questioned by Peter having to do with the number of times required, that one must exercise forgiveness, Jesus states, "seventy times seven", simply meaning always (vs. 22). Then the Lord adds that if we do not forgive others "from the heart," our Heavenly Father will not forgive us. God takes forgiveness seriously!

Church discipline as applied to the offices of Lead Pastor, Elder, or Deacon

The Local Lead Pastor

1. As outlined under the heading "The Local Lead Pastor" above, point 1, the office of Lead Pastor is to be of indefinite duration, being changed only by the choice of the Lead Pastor himself or by the leadership and the congregation, as outlined in the article on church discipline.
2. This would mean that if the Lead Pastor were to become involved in a sin, and having been charged of this sin by two or three witnesses, should be brought before the body of believers making up the local congregation of RSMI, to be publicly rebuked. This of course takes into consideration that the proof of the incorrect behavior is

conclusively shown. If upon this occasion the Lead Pastor refuses to repent, being unremorseful of their transgression, they may be asked to leave their position by a 100% rule of the elders, deacons, as well as a 2/3rds majority of the congregation of those having “declared their fellowship.”

3. This is not to say that the Lead Pastor themselves should not prayerfully consider stepping down in their ability to lead has been compromised
4. If the sin is to continue after removal from office they may be dis-fellowshipped (asked to leave fellowship permanently) that their sin may not affect the body.

Pastor/Elders

1. As outlined under the heading Pastor/Elders above, point #9, the office of elder is to be of indefinite duration, being changed only by the choice of the Pastor/Elder themselves or by the leadership and the congregation as outlined in the article on church discipline.
2. This would mean that the same process used to discipline the Lead Pastor would apply for any *RSMI* Pastor/Elder caught in an offense. This would be through a process of accurate accusation, public rebuke, and removal according to point two, Lead Pastor, if remorse and repentance is not evident. This process is to be carried forth primarily by the Senior Pastor himself, as well as the other elders.
3. Moreover, if the Pastor/Elder has totally compromised their ability to lead it would be incumbent upon them to step down
4. In the case of gross sin, even with repentance the Lead Pastor may, with the other Pastor/Elders ask for the resignation of said elder. If the sin is to continue after removal from office they may be dis-fellowshipped (asked to leave fellowship permanently) that their sin may not affect the body.

Deacon

1. As outlined under the heading of Deacons above, point #7, the office of Deacon is to be of indefinite duration, being changed only by the choice of the Deacon themselves, or by the leadership as outlined in the article on church discipline.
2. This process would entail the showing of one’s fault by a brother or sister (brother to brother, sister to sister) in private. If the sin is repented of then the accuser has gained their brother or sister. If repentance is not retained the matter should be taken to an elder who at that time should arrange to go with the offended party to speak to the offending deacon, having first informed the Lead Pastor. If legitimacy of the offence can be ascertained, and repentance is secured, the Deacon is to continue in probationary status for a period of time to be determined by the Lead Pastor and the Pastor/Elders. If legitimacy can be determined and yet there is no remorse and repentance, the offending deacon is to be taken before the entire congregation for public rebuke. Upon this occasion, with no resulting repentance the Lead Pastor and the Pastor/Elders may remove the person from their position. If the sin is to continue after removal from office they may be dis-fellowshipped (asked to leave fellowship permanently) that their sin may not affect the body.

The Body

1. The discipline for those of the general congregation of the body of believers that make up what is to be known as *RSMI* is to follow the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-20.
2. Step one in the process is a private encounter with one that has taken notice of the offense. If repentance and reconciliation is not secured the process is to move to step two, taking along a brother, or sister, depending on the gender of the offender and offended. If repentance and reconciliation is not secured the elders and Lead Pastor are to be informed and are to prayerfully consider taking the offending person before the congregation.
3. If, after consulting the Lord and approaching the brother or sister caught in the offence, there seems to be no remorse, the person should be taken before the entire congregation of believers for public rebuke.
4. When this process is complete and no repentance is obtained the offender must be disfellowshipped that the integrity of the body may be maintained and the Lord honored.
5. Any discipline seemed necessary for one that is part of the body of Christ gathered under the heading of *RSMI*, may also be considered appropriate for those who are members of the Board of Trustees. The only difference would be that if found in sin and trespass, while sitting on the Board of Trustees, one may be asked to leave their place on said board. It is the position of *RSMI* that one caught in personal sin, without repentance, cannot serve in any capacity, whether in church governmental leadership, financial leadership, or any other position that might occur based upon the growth and need of the ministry.

One final note

There must be one final note having to do with church discipline at *RSMI*. Any discipline that is to be applied must be carried forth in a spirit of love and concern, not only for the body and the honor of the Lord, but also for the one caught in sin. It is only by God's glorious grace that we have been brought into fellowship with the Creator.

It is because of this that we must always be mindful of our inability to please God apart for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. This is a gift that cannot be earned nor retained by our own efforts. By His grace the Father called us and by His grace He will keep us. This being said we should always consider Him who called us that we never find ourselves ungrateful of His love; and because of this truth we must love others no matter in what sin they are found, never ceasing to pray for even the most hardened heart that they might be restored to fellowship with Him, for He will not let them go

The following are the positions the *RSMI* takes on Membership – Offerings and Giving – and The Sacraments

Membership

- 1 It is the position of *RSMI* that the term "membership," concerning a local church body is not only redundant but dangerous.
- 2 It is impossible for one, not having committed their life to Christ to align themselves in fellowship with someone who has allowed this step in their lives because there cannot be agreement. The apostle Paul stated:

2 Co 6:14-16

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

NIV

- 3 Therefore, because of the above *RSMI* would prefer to use the term, "*declaring of fellowship*". If someone has true saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ they have already obtained inclusion in the body of Christ corporate, having been baptized into Him through the work of the Holy Spirit. Because of the reality of this event there is a redundancy in the thought of membership. The preferred term, "*declaring of fellowship*" carries with it the sense and responsibility of aligning oneself with the doctrine, the vision, and the goals of a local congregation.
- 4 Along with this aligning oneself with the doctrine, vision, and goals of a local body, to "*declare one's fellowship*", would mean that the person having done this has committed themselves to the mutual submission, edification, support, faith acts, and financial increase of said congregation. In short they have become part of that local expression of the universal body of Christ
- 5 As mentioned above to say one has become a "member" of a local body is not only redundant, but dangerous. This is because there are those who might misinterpret membership as having the meaning of salvation. *RSMI* takes the position that no initial act or work of any individual person can lead to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Man cannot initiate salvation, for this can only be accomplished through the giving of faith and the gracious act of regeneration brought to us by the efficacy of the blood of Christ and the effective call of God on someone's life. Because of this we would leave no possibility, however small, of adding to the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Scripture.
- 6 For one to "*declare their fellowship*" with those of the body found at *RSMI*, they must become familiar with the beliefs and practices of the church (how can one make an honest commitment to something if there is a lack of clarity having to do with the thing committed to)?
 - a) The first part of the process is to arrange a meeting with the Lead Pastor, or if not available, a designated replacement. This is the opportunity to ask any questions that the prospective participant in fellowship might have concerning the doctrine, visions, or goals of the church.
 - b) After the meeting there should be a time of personal and/or family prayer concerning the commitment. It is important to determine the Lord's will during the decision making process
 - c) If more questions arise concerning the practice or beliefs of the church one should make at least telephone contact to seek an answer.
 - d) If, after this time there is a confidence that the decision is of God the Lead Pastor or a pastoral assistant should be notified.
 - e) The final step would be a declaration of commitment to fellowship made before the assembled congregation. This would usually take place during a Sunday service, where the Pastor/Elders and leaders of the church would pray over and lay hands on the individual or family. With this they would be welcomed into fellowship by the entire congregation.

Offerings and Giving

- 1 Although it is common among most of the church to speak in terms of tithing it is the conviction of *RSMI* that a different approach is necessary. It is because of this conviction that the church entity bases its model of giving on 2 Cor. Chaps. 8-9.

- 2 Giving is to be entirely upon the conviction of the individual (2 Cor. 8:3)
- 3 One is to completely give themselves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5a) with the result that they will act in keeping with the will of God (2 Cor. 8:5b)
- 4 Giving is a grace that is placed in someone's life by the Lord (2 Cor. 8:7).
- 5 Giving exemplifies the heart and love of the Savior (2 Cor. 8:8, 9)
- 6 Our giving is not acceptable to God if we do not will to give (2 Cor. 8:12).
- 7 Giving is to be according to what one has, not according to what one does not have (2 Cor.8:12).
- 8 When we have abundance we are to give liberally and in return when we have lack, abundance will be supplied to us (2 Cor. 8:13-15).
- 9 When we give it brings honor to God (2 Cor. 8:19).
- 10 Giving is a proof of love: Love of the body, Love of those that do not know Him, and Love of Christ Himself (2 Cor. 8:24).
- 11 We must honor the commitments we have made to give (2 Cor. 9:1-5).
- 12 If we sow sparingly we will reap sparingly – conversely, if we sow generously we will reap generously (2 Cor. 9:6).
- 13 Giving, and the amount given, is an individual decision. If we are pressured to give a specific amount the gift is not given from the heart and therefore the gift is not acceptable before God (2 Cor. 9:7-9).
- 14 Our provision comes from God. As we are obedient to sow according to His will He has promised to enrich us in every way. As a result, those who receive the gift will glorify God (2 Cor. 9:10-11).
- 15 As we supply the needs of others, i.e., those who are called to labor in the word and in prayer, as well as the widow, the stranger, and the orphan, it enhances the spread of the Gospel and God receives praise (2 Cor. 9:12-14). Simply put, if we give into a work of God in a particular body we must have the assurance it will be used not only for the support of the ministry within the walls of the church, to train up the body of Christ, but also for outreach: to feed the poor, and clothe the naked, to shelter those who have no home, and to promote the spreading of the Gospel.
- 16 Ultimately thanks should be given to God at all times, and in all manners for the gracious gift of His Son, Jesus Christ the Lord (2 Cor. 9:15).
- 17 To sum up *RSMI's* stance on offerings and giving; it is up to the individual or the family to determine what they are to give at any particular time, according to the will of the Lord for them. He knows our individual needs, and is the source of all supply. They are expected to pray for direction and then give in harmony to His revealed will. It is in this revealed will and our obedience to it that we find liberty. The Lord is found faithful to give direction as far as the amount, yet the Spirit led obligation is incumbent upon all those who claim the name of Christ to support His work in the fellowship where He has placed them. If we are faithful to act in obedient response to His direction, He will supply not only our need but also the need of the ministry as well.

Sacraments

1. *RSMI* recognizes two sacraments (ordinances) that have been traditionally preformed in the Protestant church, Water Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Communion).
(The following is brief survey of this ministry's stance on each)
2. The classical use of the word sacrament means, anything that binds someone to bring them under an obligation. "In its ecclesiastical usage, the word, while retaining its general sense of something binding as sacred, was at an early period used as the Latin equivalent of the Greek word *mysterion* (μυστηριον) that which is unknown until revealed; and hence any symbol, type, or rite having a latent spiritual meaning." The sacraments had to be instituted by Christ Himself as were Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper. For this reason SJCF will recognize none other than these two.

Water Baptism

1. Baptism should only be administered to those who have given a credible confession of faith in Jesus Christ the Lord as the only means of salvation and eternal life. Therefore water baptism is to stand as a sign of inauguration and investiture into the body of Christ corporate. As the Holy Spirit applies the work of redemption to our lives in the act of regeneration (being born from above), we come into living union with Christ, and by extension with all those who have been united to Him as well. Water baptism, therefore is an outward declaration that this process has taken place, and a seal of covenant relationship in Christ Jesus.
2. *RSMI* holds to the doctrine that nothing must be, nor can be added to the saving grace of God. One cannot obtain eternal life by any self-work (Eph. 2:8). Further, there is no combination of self-work and grace (synergism) that can effectively lead to one's salvation (Isa. 64:6). If water baptism is placed before regeneration this would cause it to be seen as a means of salvation rather than a declaration that salvation had been accomplished. This robs our magnificent God of the glory due His name. Although the apostle Peter, in Acts 2:38, seems to give baptism as a requirement for salvation, he does not give this same stipulation in the following chapter (Acts 3:19). In the former reference his audience was the Jewish pilgrims who had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. Peter, himself a Jew, knew that baptism was one of the conditions required for a proselyte to convert to Judaism. Therefore *RSMI* holds that the apostle purposely used baptism as a means of making a point to those who had cried out to him and the other apostles, "brothers, what shall we do". That point simply being, to become a convert to Christianity meant that one had entered into an entirely new economy. This would have been very humbling for those Jews present. At the least, because we have two statements in adjoining chapters that seem to contradict themselves, it would seem apparent that it would be dangerous to build a doctrine off of Acts 2:38 as some have. Especially in light of the fact that the Bible plainly declares that it is only by grace we are saved (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:5; Jn. 6:44, 65; Acts 13:48, 16:14; et. al.).
3. The mode of baptism we see practiced in the biblical text of the New Testament is complete immersion, even though it is not commanded as a necessary means toward the correct practice. This (complete immersion) is reflected in the Greek word *baptizō* which simply means "to immerse" or "submerge" (Mk. 1:5, 10; Acts 8:36), yet this word in its classical usage can also mean to "to moisten," "to wet," "to purify," or "to wash." This full immersion is to represent death and rebirth, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:11-12). Yet the Scripture does not declare as incorrect the sprinkling of an individual in the rite of baptism. In the Old Testament the nascent community of faith was "sprinkled" by the blood (Ex 24:8) which represented their cleansing and sealing in the covenant upon their confession of obedience. The blood of sacrifice was also

sprinkled on the priesthood (Ex 29:19-21; Le 8:30) and on the utensils of worship (Ex 24:6; Le 8:11, 19).

4. The words baptizō and nipto (to cleanse, especially the hands, the feet, or the face; ceremonially, to perform ablution) are sometimes used interchangeably. In Mk 7:3 it speaks of the ceremonial washing (nipto) of the Jews, but in the following verse it is said of the Jews that when they come from the market place they do not eat unless they wash (baptizō), and that they hold to many other traditions such as the washing (baptizō) of cups. In Lk 11:38 the Pharisees took notice of the fact that Jesus did not wash (baptizō) His hands before His meal. In Mt 15:2 Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus with a complaint that His disciples did not wash (nipto) their hands in ceremonial cleansing before they ate.
5. All this is to say that while emersion, representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is the form of baptism most practiced by the early church; this cleansing process can also be declared by the sprinkling of water as well. If one were to come to *RSMI* and had decided to “declare their fellowship” with us, having been previously “sprinkled” in baptism, this would be considered an effective means of an external declaration of faith. It is not the form that declares the inner work but the inner work itself (regeneration) that is mandatory in salvation. If we put too much emphasis on the mode, rather than the afore mentioned inner work, we are emphasizing the works of man rather than the grace of God.
6. There has been great debate over the centuries having to do with in which name or names is one to be baptized. The Lord Jesus Himself commanded the eleven disciples that were to carry on after His ascension to “...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).” Yet we see the apostles declaring baptism “in Jesus’ name (Acts 2:38,39; 3:19; 8:16; 10:48; 19:4-5; Rom 6:3; 1 Co 1:13).” When encountering disciples in Ephesus, the apostle Paul asked them if they had “received the Holy Spirit when they had believed,” to which they answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-2). Upon further questioning the apostle finds that they had been baptized after the baptism of John the Baptist, which was for repentance in preparation to receive the Coming One (Jesus, v. 4). Paul’s solution was simple, “On hearing this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (v. 5).” *RSMI* holds that although the Trinity is to be pronounced by the baptizer over the one being baptized yet the name of Christ is to be pronounced and invoked as well. Also the one being baptized is to confess and call upon the name of Christ (Acts 22:16). This is to recognize and affirm Jesus Christ as God’s vehicle of redemption, for certainly salvation it is in “no other name (Acts 4:12). Baptism therefore, must be a sign and seal (a proof of authenticity and something that affirms or attests) of a work already accomplished by the Holy Spirit. If one is immediately baptized upon first confession of faith this is a concurrent act, meaning that regeneration (first in logical order) happens concurrently with baptism. Yet as the church father Augustine pointed out, the sign must not be confused with the thing signified (it is regeneration through the work of the Holy Spirit which applies the work of redemption, not the physical act of baptism itself).
7. Finally, *RSMI* acknowledges that although baptism is not a means of salvation it is a vital ingredient in the initial stages of the Christian life. This declaration of faith and inclusion in the body of Christ corporate should and must be performed by an individual that has found new life in the Savior and is to be performed before the sign of continuance found in the sacrament (ordinance) of the Lord’s Supper.

The Lord’s Supper (Communion)

- 1 The Lord’s Supper is a covenantal meal that was instituted by Christ Himself (Mt 26:26-29). After He had blessed the bread and broken it He passed it to His disciples and said “Take, eat; this is My body.” When they had done this he also took a cup and after He had given thanks again He passed this also to those gathered and stated “Drink of it, all of you; for this is the blood of My covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Upon their drinking the Lord made this startling statement.

"I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Following this initiation of the sacrament by Christ the apostle Paul, in 1 Cor 11:23 states that he "received from the Lord what he also passed on" to those of the Corinth church. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
NIV

- 2 In the Old Testament there are instances of eating and drinking before the Lord. When the newly formed Hebrew nation was camped before Mt. Sinai in the wilderness, having just received the Ten Commandments, God summoned those who lead Israel to meet with Him. "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank (Ex 24:9-11 NIV)."
This shows us that traditionally the striking of a covenant was concluded with a covenantal meal. Further, the nation of Israel was commanded of God that they were to tithe of all their crops. "Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always (Dt 14:22-23, NIV)." If the place was to distant they were to sell their tithe and carry the silver and gold to the place that the Lord had appointed and then purchase with it that which they were to eat before the Lord. "Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice (Dt 14:26, NIV)."
- 3 The fellowship meals of the Old Testament did not fully represent that which we have today under the New Covenant of the blood of Jesus Christ because those that partook of such were still steeped in their sin nature. The sacrifices had to be repeated year after year that the people might have a way of approach to God (Heb 10:1-4). Yet because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we have obtained by God's grace, full and complete forgiveness is we have entered into covenant relationship with the Savior.

Heb 10:5-7

5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; 6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. 7 Then I said, 'Here I am-it is written about me in the scroll- I have come to do your will, O God.'"

NIV

It is because of this triumphant accomplishment that we may now eat in the presence of God, fully and completely restored into fellowship with Him through the Lord Jesus.

- 4 The Lord's Supper symbolizes specific things to a Christian
 - a) The death of Christ – The death of the Lord Jesus is pictured for us as we partake of the communion with Him. As the bread is broken it displays to us the breaking of His body, while the cup being poured out symbolizes His blood being poured out that we might obtain forgiveness. This breaking and pouring out is a proclamation of His death (2 Cor 11:26)
 - b) The receiving of the results of Christ's work – Through the taking of the Lord's Supper, each that receives the bread and the cup is stating publicly that they are also receiving the benefits of the Lord's death, for it was the Lord Himself that declared, "Take, eat; this is My body (Mt 26:26)."

- c) The receiving of spiritual sustenance – When we take of the Supper we are strengthened just as when we eat physical food. Just as physical sustenance nourishes our natural bodies, the taking of the Supper is a symbol (a sign and a seal) of the new life that we have in Christ that we are unable to have apart from Him. In John, chapter six Jesus said to the Jews and disciples that followed Him for a short time, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me (Jn 6:53-57 NIV).” Jesus was not espousing cannibalism but a spiritual partaking of the benefits of redemption He was to accomplish through His work of crucifixion and resurrection. We cannot have true life without this nourishment, therefore our act of involvement in the Lord’s Supper symbolizes out receiving of this nourishment.
- d) The union of believers in Him – The apostle Paul declared, “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf (1 Co 10:17, NIV).”
When we partake of the Lord’s Supper (Communion), we are united with all other believers who do the same.
- 5 How is it that the work of Christ is applied to our lives in an on-going way? *RSMI* holds to the doctrine that Christ is present in the Supper in a symbolic and spiritual way. When Jesus said, “Take eat, this is My body,” what did He intend to convey? In John six Jesus stated, The final point is to the frequency of the celebration. The Scripture does not set a time frame as to the rate of reoccurrence of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Rather than this it states simply, “...as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup (1 Cor 11:26),” it is a proclamation of the Lord’s death.
Because of the fact that there is no scriptural mandate concerning the frequency

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me (Jn 6:54-57 NIV).”

Does this statement of the Lord intend to suggest that we are to eat of the literal body and blood of Christ? In Roman Catholic theology during the rite of communion the host and the wine, it is believed, are turned into the literal body and blood of Christ. This understanding was instituted by pope Innocent III in 1215 A.D. Yet if the Lord had intended to take John 6:54-57 literally why is it that just a few verses later He made this statement, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life (Jn 6:63 NIV).” This declaration of the Lord shows us that He was instituting a spiritual principle rather than a literal one. The Holy Spirit moves upon us, causing us to become new creatures in Christ Jesus and thereby giving us the ability to partake of Christ through union with Him.

We find this life, not only by the fact of the benefit of His death and resurrection, but also by how that work is applied to us in union with Him. This spiritual reality far exceeds the natural possibility of partaking of His natural body and blood. John Calvin put it this way...

“...if we are lifted up to heaven with our eyes and minds, to seek Christ there in the glory of His Kingdom, as the symbols invite us to Him in His wholeness, so under the symbol of bread we shall be fed by His body, under the symbol of wine we shall separately drink His blood, to enjoy Him at last in His wholeness. For though He has taken His flesh away from us, and in the body has ascended into heaven, yet He sits at the right hand of the Father – that is, He reigns in the Father’s power and majesty and glory. This Kingdom is neither bounded by location in space nor circumscribed by any limits. Thus Christ is not prevented from exerting His power wherever He pleases, in

heaven and on earth. He shows His presence in power and strength, is always among His own people, and breathes His life upon them, and lives in them, sustaining them, strengthening, quickening, keeping them unharmed, as if He were present in the body. In short, He feeds His people with His own body, the communion of which He bestows upon them by the power of His Spirit. In this manner, the body and blood of Christ are shown to us in the Sacrament.”

Calvin goes on to say:

“...we must establish such a presence of Christ in the Supper as may neither fasten Him to the element of bread (Roman Catholicism), not enclose Him in bread (Luther), nor circumscribe Him in any way (all which things, it is clear, detract from His heavenly glory).”

RSMI again holds that the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is spiritually present in the bread and the wine. This presence of Christ comes to us as we participate in His supper.

It is not that He is not present because He is not physically in the elements; it is that He is present on a much higher level. Because of this spiritual reality we must realize that He comes to allow us to receive the benefits of His death in an ongoing manner and this truth is symbolized in the sacrament of communion. Yet this sacrament is not to be viewed as only a ritual, a memorial, or a recognition of His work. If this were the case Paul, after having stated that as we take of the Lord’s Supper we proclaim His death until He comes (1 Cor 11:26) would not have admonished us that,

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord (1 Co 11:27, NIV).”

Certainly we can infer from this statement that participation in the Lord’s Supper is far more than dead ritual. Jesus promised that, “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst (Mt 18:20 NASU).”

Wayne Grudem put it this way:

“...if He is especially present when Christians gather to worship, then we would expect that He will be present in a special way in the Lord’s Supper. We meet Him at His table, to which He comes to give Himself to us. As we receive the elements of the bread and wine in the presence of Christ, so we partake of Him and all His benefits. We ‘feed upon Him in our hearts’ with thanksgiving.”

- 6 *RSMI* has chosen to celebrate the Supper once a month in conjunction with corporate worship, the ministry of the word concerning communion, and a fellowship meal, declaring the union of not only an individual believer with Christ, but also that of the fellowship in the Holy Spirit that is to be had with one another. Our relationship with Christ is displayed by our relationship with each other.

Jesus proclaimed, “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (Jn 17:23, NIV).” The purpose of the Fellowship Meal, is to state not only that we can now rejoice in the presence of a Holy God that has called us to Himself through the work of Christ, but that through union in Him has come not only the possibility, but the directive and authorization to have this union with one another as well.

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