



THE ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICAL MINISTERS

A Ministry of Dallas Theological Seminary

GUIDELINES

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PURPOSE

The Association of Evangelical Ministers is organized exclusively for Christian ministry support purposes to alumni of Dallas Theological Seminary who are participating in or retired from active professional ministry.

The purpose of the Association is to provide a professional association for those alumni in Christian ministry that is founded on a specific "Code of Ethics" that will accomplish the following:

- Enhance one's ministry by adhering to specific standards for ethical, moral, and biblical integrity
- Provide a resource for ministerial support, encouragement, and fellowship
- Improve competency in ministry
- Provide peer support and accountability both professionally and personally.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in the authority and inerrancy of Scripture.

We believe that all "Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings, as they appear in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible in the originals is without error (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16).

We believe in the Trinity.

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience (Matt. 28:18–19; 2 Cor. 13:13).

We believe in the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

We believe that Jesus was born of a virgin and received a human body and a sinless human nature. He became and remained a perfect man, and was sinless throughout His life. He retained His absolute deity, being at the same time very God and very man (Luke 2:40; John 1:1–2; Phil. 2:5–8).

We believe in the total depravity and the spiritual lostness of the human race.

We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, and that he fell through sin, and, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the devil. We believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably sinful apart from divine grace (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 3:10–19; 8:6–7; Eph. 2:1–3).

We believe in the substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We believe that according to the Scriptures Jesus Christ died for our sin and arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers (John 20:20; Phil. 3:20–21).

We believe in salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

We believe that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again and that no degree of merit can be gained or earned to help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation. The new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:7–18; Rom. 5:6–9).

We believe in the assurance of salvation.

We believe it is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior and that this assurance is based wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word (Luke 10:20; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6–8).

We believe in the Christian walk.

We believe that we are called with a holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Rom. 6:11–13; 8:2, 4, 12–13; Gal. 5:16–23).

We believe in the premillennial, physical return of Christ.

We believe that the present age will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as He went, to restore Israel to her own land and to give her the realization of God's covenant promises and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God (Deut. 30:1–10; Ezek. 37:21–28; Matt. 24:15–25; Rev. 20:1–3).

CODE OF ETHICS

We are committed to excellence in ministry characterized by:

Faithfulness: to God, our spouse, and family

We are committed to faithfulness to God through daily prayer, worship, and the reading, meditation, and study of God's Word. We are committed to maintaining a close personal walk with God.

We are committed to faithfulness to our spouse through emotional and sexual purity. We are committed to maintaining a strong marriage and strong families.

We are committed to faithfulness to our families through godly leadership, biblical love, and devotion. We are committed to discipleship and training in the family.

Integrity: above reproach

We are committed to personal integrity in ministry in keeping with the qualifications for leadership. We will conduct ourselves in an honest and professional manner, always reflecting the highest biblical integrity in keeping with our call in the areas mentioned in this code. We will endeavor to do right by all people.

We are committed to keeping ourselves above reproach in all areas of life. We are committed to moral soundness, honesty, and uprightness.

Service: with others and to others

We are committed to godly servant leadership. We recognize that we are servants to the people that God has entrusted to our care, following the call of the Master. We are committed to being servants in the likeness of Jesus Christ, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit as we serve.

We are committed to mutually building up the body of Christ, recognizing and affirming the different gifts in the assembly. In the occurrence of criticism or complaints brought by a member of the body, we are committed to discussion leading to restoration between members of the body.

We are committed to diligently preserving unity in the body of Christ. We will not knowingly participate in the division of any local church. If such division occurs, we will not personally participate in the start of another church in the same locale.

Accountability: to God, to family, to peers, to our ministry

We are committed first and foremost to accountability to God, and to our spouse regarding spirituality and faithfulness.

We are committed to accountability to our peers regarding personal integrity in ministry.

We are committed to accountability to the leadership of the church regarding responsibility and service.

Confidentiality: for the body of believers

We are committed to strict confidentiality in ministry except when information must be released in accordance with state law. We will seek to apprise individuals of all mandated disclosures.

We are committed to confidentiality in ministry and consider a statement made in confidence a trust not to be shared unless with that individual's written permission indicating informed consent to such release.

Stewardship: within the church and our personal lives

We are committed to good stewardship of what God has entrusted to our care. We will be honest and open in all of our financial dealings. We will promptly pay all debts as soon as possible. We will not use our position to gain any financial privilege or leverage. While we advocate adequate compensation for God's servants, we do not expect or require honorariums for services rendered within our normal duties. We will be careful to guard our hearts against greed and materialism.

We are committed to good stewardship in the church and will be totally forthright in all financial undertakings of the church. We view all contributions as gifts to the Lord that have been entrusted into our care. Our responsibility is to spend those gifts as wisely as possible in continuing the ministry.

Professionalism: to communicate the Word of God effectively

We are committed to accurately and skillfully communicating the Word of God, speaking the truth with conviction in love, and will acknowledge any extensive use of material prepared by someone else.

We are committed to honoring our fellow servants in God's household. We will not seek to build our ministries at the expense of other legitimate ministries. We will communicate with the rest of Christ's family to encourage unity and the proper allocation of resources in an area of ministry.

The unethical conduct of any member will subject the member to the disciplinary action of the association toward restoration or dismissal.

LEADERSHIP

An Advisory Council shall manage the activities, property, and affairs of the Association. The essential function of the Council shall be policy-making. The Council has ultimate responsibility for determining general, financial, and related policies deemed necessary for the administration and development of the Association in accord with its stated purpose.

The number constituting the Council of the Association shall be at least seven (7) but not more than eleven (11). The number of Council members constituting the initial Council shall be ten (10). Five (5) members of the Council shall serve by virtue of holding the following offices:

Director of The Association of Evangelical Ministers
Director of Alumni and Church Relations, Dallas Theological Seminary
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dallas Theological Seminary
Designated member of the Board of Incorporate Members, Dallas Theological Seminary
President, Dallas Theological Seminary (as Consultant/Ex Officio)

The remaining members of the Council shall be elected by a majority vote of those present at a regular annual meeting for a term of five (5) years each, or to shorter terms in those cases which are hereinafter set forth.

The members of the Council shall each be a Christian of recognized character and in full agreement with the ideals and purposes of the Association. The members of the Council shall give annual written affirmation to the Doctrinal Statement as adopted by the Council after the first annual meeting.

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

The Advisory Council may designate two or more members to constitute a subcommittee or committees for any purpose. The standing committees of the Council for the Association shall be appointed, as the need arises, annually for one-year terms by the chairman of the Council with the appointment of at least one Council member to each committee. The Association currently has four committees:

I. Peer Support Committee

Purpose:

To provide encouragement and evaluation from one's peers in ministry to maximize faithfulness.

Responsibilities. The Peer Support Committee shall:

1. Seek to restore members who fall into difficulty
2. Generate specific activities for peer support and mentoring
3. Support office staff in ensuring ongoing communications with members

II. Membership Qualifications, Certification, and Dues Committee

Purpose: To recommend to the Association the qualifications for membership and to suggest policy for the application process. This committee will also determine the criteria for recertification. This committee shall assist the office staff in decisions regarding questionable cases of application for recertification.

Responsibilities: The Membership Committee shall:

1. Oversee the design and production of the application questionnaire
2. Oversee the approval of applicants and recommend membership and certification to the Council
3. Recommend the removal or decertification of members to the Council of the Association when moral/ethical situations merit

4. Recommend to the Council the annual dues for membership in the Association
5. Arbitrate any nonlitigious disputes with regard to the approval or revocation of membership in the Association.

III. Benefits Committee

Purpose: To create, evaluate, and maintain a list of benefits for members.

Responsibilities: The Benefits Committee shall:

1. Create an initial list of benefits for members and recommend the list to the Council
2. Evaluate each benefit, at least annually, as to its appropriateness and perceived value
3. Explore new options for benefits, at least annually, and recommend new benefits to the Council

IV. Professional Development Committee

Purpose: To design and provide professional development opportunities for Association members in order to increase their ministry effectiveness.

Responsibilities: The Professional Development Committee shall:

1. Discern professional development needs of Association members
2. Design development opportunities to meet the needs identified
3. Arrange and/or conduct professional development opportunities

MEMBERSHIP

Alumni of Dallas Theological Seminary who are currently serving or are retired from serving in a professional ministry capacity and who meet the admissions criteria will be considered for membership.

Duration and Fees

Duration. Membership without recertification shall last a period of three years from the point of acceptance into the Association.

Fees. Individual members shall pay an annual fee as determined by the Advisory Council. This amount shall cover annual dues and all benefits authorized by the Association at that particular time. Dues/fees may be graduated depending upon the individual's situation subject to review by the Membership committee.

Admission

Admission Authority. The Membership Qualifications committee shall recommend individuals for membership to the Advisory Council who will have the final authority to admit individuals into membership of the Association.

Admission Requirements. Admissions requirements are the following:

1. Alumni of Dallas Theological Seminary who are currently serving or are retired from serving in a professional ministry
2. Ordination or commission from an endorsing agency
3. Strong willingness to adhere to the Code of Ethics
4. Agreement with the Doctrinal Statement
5. Spousal support letter (if married)
6. Provide at least two references verifying the applicant's qualification
7. The application for membership presented to the acting Director along with the annual due

Recertification. After the period of three years, a member may be considered for recertification. At this time, the member will be required to provide the following:

1. Affirmation from the church or organization currently being served
2. Self-evaluation letter
3. Spousal letter (if married)
4. Annual dues for continued membership

Withdrawal and Dismissal

Withdrawal. Any member may withdraw from the Association by sending a formal resignation letter to the Membership Committee if he/she realizes that he/she can no longer in good conscience adhere to the Guidelines of the Association. However, as part of membership a member agrees to submit to the disciplinary process of the Association. Dismissal. A member may be dismissed from the Association if he or she fails to adhere to the Guidelines. The Association, in the spirit of Matthew 18, will seek restoration to fellowship through the following process:

1. Upon becoming aware of a charge against a member, the member will be contacted individually by a member of the Peer Support Committee, and/or a designated representative of the Peer Support Committee in the local area, for clarification and possible resolution.

If the issue is unable to be resolved individually and dismissal is the recommendation from the representative to the Peer Support Committee, the member will be notified that the recommendation for dismissal is being made to the Peer Support Committee.

The member will have the opportunity to state in writing within ten (10) days his or her intention either to accept or to deny the charges. This will be sent to the Peer Support Committee. Lack of response in ten (10) days indicates acceptance that the charges are not being contested.

2. If charges are denied, the member may choose to meet with the Peer Support Committee to discuss the charges. The decision of the Peer Support Committee is limited to four options: (a) recommendation to the Advisory Council that the charges be withdrawn (because the member is considered innocent of the charges or because the offense is judged insufficiently severe to warrant other action), (b) recommendation to the Council that the member be given a written or verbal reprimand, (c) recommendation to the Advisory Council that the member be held accountable by the Peer Support Committee for any agreed upon steps toward resolution or restoration, (d) recommendation to the Council for dismissal from the Association.
3. If option (c) from above is chosen and agreed to by the Council, peer members of the Association in that local area, as designated by the Peer Support Committee, will convene and outline in writing the agreed steps for restoration. (During the time of the agreed restoration process, the member will not be considered in good standing with the Association but considered in the process of restoration toward good standing.)
4. However, if all attempts fail, the Peer Support Committee will recommend to the Advisory Council removal of certification and dismissal from the Association.
5. The Advisory Council will make the final decision and notify the member. The decision of the Council for dismissal must be by a two-thirds majority vote.
6. The member may be considered for recertification to membership at the discretion of the Peer Support Committee's recommendation to the Advisory Council.

Appeal. Members have a right to appeal the decision in writing within 10 days of receiving written notification, with any new supporting documentation or personal references who might be contacted to help clarify the situation. The member's case would be presented and reviewed first by the Peer Support Committee which will carry its recommendation to the Advisory Council which will make the final decision.

If there is an unresolved dispute or issue resulting from the action of the Association, or if the member seeks to challenge the action then both the Association and the member should submit the dispute or challenge to a Christian mediation/arbitration panel in accord with the rules of the Christian Conciliation Service (1 Cor. 6:1–7). This is the sole remedy available to the aggrieved member.

PROSCRIBED ACTIVITIES

No part of the net earnings of the Association shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.

No substantial part of the activities of the Association shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Association shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

AMENDMENTS TO GUIDELINES

These Guidelines may be amended from time to time provided, however, that no amendment shall be made which would alter the exclusive Christian ministry support given or would cause any pecuniary benefit to inure to any director, incorporator, donor, or donors or to any officer or individual.

Any amendment must have been approved at a duly held meeting of the Advisory Council by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Advisory Council voting in person or by proxy, provided the substance of any proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the members of the Council at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting at which a quorum is present.