

## REVISIONS TO BYLAWS IN *MANAGING CONFLICT IN YOUR CHURCH*

If your church previously adopted the model bylaws provided in Peacemaker Ministries' *Managing Conflict in Your Church* materials and you now wish to adopt the model Relational Commitments provided in the *Peacemaking Church* materials, you can do so by making the following amendments to your existing bylaws:

- First, add the following provision to your bylaws:

***Relational Commitments:*** Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled "Relational Commitments," which is incorporated into these Bylaws by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, preserving marriages, protecting children, biblical counseling, confidentiality, accountability, and church discipline. These Commitments shall apply to both members and attenders of our church, and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these Bylaws may be amended.

- Second, delete the corresponding relational provisions from your bylaws, which are: Bylaw 13 (Biblical Counseling), Bylaw 14 (Confidentiality), and Bylaw 15 (Conflict Resolution).
- Third, amend Bylaw 16 (Church Discipline) to read as follows: "Church Discipline: Church discipline shall be carried out according to [the Book of Church Order of [denomination name], as explained in] our Relational Commitments and the Guidelines for Church Discipline developed by the Board of Elders." (New language is underlined.)

Immediately below is a letter that you can send to non-member attenders in your congregation to explain these proposed changes.

## LETTER TO ATTENDERS IN A CHURCH THAT PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED MODEL BYLAWS

*This letter may be sent out to non-member attenders in a church that previously adopted the model Bylaws included in Peacemaker Ministries' Managing Conflict in Your Church manual.*

To: Regular Attenders of \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
Re: Adoption of Relational Commitments

As you have hopefully learned, our church is deeply committed to equipping and assisting its members to respond to conflict in a biblically faithful manner. As part of that commitment, we previously adopted Bylaws that set forth our commitment to biblical peacemaking, counseling, confidentiality, and accountability.

After a careful review of our Bylaws, we have concluded that it would be wise to move some of these provisions into a separate document that focuses on how we relate to one another in our church. This document is based on model Relational Commitments developed by Peacemaker Ministries, which we have adapted to suit the particular convictions and governing structure of our church.

As you will see when you read the enclosed booklet, these Commitments cover important relational issues, such as peacemaking and reconciliation, marriage and divorce, protecting children from abuse, counseling, confidentiality, and mutual accountability within our church.

We believe that adopting these Commitments will strengthen our church's resolve to respond to conflict biblically and relate to one another in a way that demonstrates the reconciling power of Christ in our lives. *These Commitments will apply both to members and to non-members who continue to regularly attend our church* (see page 6 in the enclosed booklet). Therefore, we would like to invite you to participate in reviewing and discussing these important changes.

If you have any questions or concerns about these Commitments, please study the Bible passages that are cited with particular provisions. Our intention is to conform our policies and practices more closely to Scripture, so we ask that your review and comments be based on the Bible as well. If you have questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact any of our leaders, who will be happy to talk with you.

A special congregational meeting is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. on \_\_\_\_\_, and will be held at the church. Since you have not yet joined the church, you will not be able to vote on whether to adopt these Commitments. Even so, we would welcome your questions and comments during this meeting. In addition, we hope that your review of these Commitments will motivate you to formally join our church and demonstrate in a concrete way your desire to unite with us to advance Christ's kingdom.