**SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR BYLAWS\***

Final authority: "The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all our beliefs and practices. We subscribe to no creed or statement of faith other than the Bible. These bylaws are intended only as a formal acknowledgement of the authority of the Bible to guide all of our decisions.”

Sanctity of life: "The Bible teaches that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image (Gen. 9:6). This sanctity of life extends to the unborn (Exodus 2:22-25).”

Gender identity: “The Bible teaches that each person is ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ in the image of God as either a male or a female (Ps. 139:14; Gen. 1:26-27). One’s gender, then, is determined by God prior to his or her birth and is immutable. In the Bible, gender identity is aligned exclusively with one’s physical characteristics at birth (Gen. 2:21-23). Any gender limitations placed on participation in any program or use of any church facility will be determined exclusively by the individual’s biological sex.”

Marriage: “According to the Bible, ‘marriage’ has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive, lifelong covenant, as delineated in Scripture and sanctioned by God (Gen 2:18-25). This union involves the joining of one member of each distinct gender into one flesh  (Matt. 19:4-6). Divorce and remarriage is prohibited except in the event of adultery by or the death of one of the spouses then the other may remarry (Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:39). The Bible teaches that sexual intimacy is only sanctioned by God when it occurs between a man and a woman who are married according to Scripture (1 Cor. 6:18, 7:2-5). Any sexual activity outside of marriage, generally called fornication in Scripture, is sinful and will be judged by God (Heb. 13:4). Outside of biblical marriage, God requires celibacy of us all (Matt. 5:27-30). Because homosexual activity necessarily occurs outside the confines of biblical marriage, it is sinful. The Bible teaches that such behavior as “unnatural” and calls practicing homosexuals to repent (Rom. 1:24-28; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).”

Weddings: “Church leaders, ministers, and members must not use their titles, positions, or influence in ways that contradict or undermine the teachings of the Bible by, among other things, officiating in wedding ceremonies that are inconsistent with the Bible’s teachings on marriage, divorce and human sexuality.” In addition, the church facilities must not be used to facilitate or promote the joining of a same-sex couple or of any persons ineligible to marry due to a prior unscriptural divorce or other biblical reason.

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