

## **THE COVENANT AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR PROFESSIONAL CHURCH LEADERS OF THE WEST VIRGINIA BAPTIST CONVENTION**

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with God's help, to deepen my obedience to the two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our West Virginia Baptist Convention churches; I will not accept a position in the WVBC family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the WVBC.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my West Virginia Baptist Convention colleagues, and other Christians.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that professional church leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my professional status.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will personally and publically support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my professional church leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make professional contacts in the field of another professional church leader without his/her request and/or consent.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will hold in confidence any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or public except when in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that the parishioner/client will cause imminent, life-threatening, or substantial harm to self or others, or unless the privilege is waived by those giving the information.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline, and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_