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December 15, 2009

Dear Partner or Contributor,

Thank you so much for your support of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International. We rejoice that together we are touching so many lives with the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

On November 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Directors and approximately 100 Partners and Contributors met at a Servant-Leaders Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana, for a conference on the state of the ministry. This was our first Servant-Leaders conference since 2005 and we met to discuss a number of issues pertinent to the direction and future of our ministry.

The following is a summarization of many of the topics that were presented and discussed, as well as some conclusions the Board has reached following the meeting. It is impossible to include everything that was discussed at our meeting, and so as you read this report, if you have any questions, we invite you to write or call us. We hope this report helps you understand our past, our present, and where we are heading in the future.

The intention of this conference was to get the Board and interested stakeholders together and discuss issues openly, face to face. We wanted to make sure everyone was clear about the organization of the ministry by exploring our past and our present. We also wanted to answer questions people had about some of the problems we have faced over the years. Furthermore, we wanted everyone to understand where we believe the Lord is pointing us at this time and thus our trajectory for our future. Our hope was that as we came together and discussed issues of concern, we could leave with our hearts knit together about our ministry and what we are doing.

We hope this report helps you see what Spirit & Truth Fellowship International is doing and how you play an important part in it. We must work together if we are going to reach people all over the world with the Good News. If people around the globe are going to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength, we must not only reach their minds with information, but we must reach their hearts through personal relationships and closely knit fellowships. Each of us has an important part in this wonderful yet challenging endeavor.

In God's Love,

Dan Gallagher, John Schoenheit, Gary Theisen, and Karen Theisen  
The Board of Directors

## Who Are We?

Spirit & Truth Fellowship International is a ministry that is teaching, training, and networking likeminded Christians around the world who desire to make known the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Our Vision**

*Building an Enduring Work of Truth*

### **Our Mission**

To research the truth of God's Word, disciple people in the truth, and promote fellowship based on the truth.

### **Our Slogan**

*Truth Matters, Spread the Word!*

### **Our Core Values**

#### **Truth**

Truth is that which is real. We recognize that God is true, and the source of all that is true. The Word of God is truth in doctrine and Jesus Christ is the truth in practice.

#### **Integrity**

Integrity is that which is true throughout, the external being consistent with the internal. We act with integrity when we act for what is true.

#### **Courage**

Courage is the mental and moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, and difficulty. It is the quality to do what is true despite our fears and trepidations.

#### **Liberty**

Liberty is freedom from restraint. It is the right of each person to govern themselves, the ability to exercise their freedoms while still being accountable for the choices they make.

# Our History

## Our Legal Formation

In 1987, some individuals who had been formerly associated with The Way International of New Knoxville, Ohio, began to call and meet with each other to discuss some other possible avenues of ministry. That early informal contact resulted in a meeting in Chicago in October of 1987. What was to become Christian Educational Services was originally discussed as being American Fellowship Services, and paperwork to incorporate under that name was drawn up. However, the name under which the organization was actually incorporated on September 8, 1988 was Christian Educational Services Incorporated, which became commonly known as “CES.” CES started with five members on the Board of Directors: Robert Belt, Ralph Dubofsky, John Lynn, Susan Pierce, and Thomas Reahard. The original Articles of Incorporation state the organization’s purpose was to:

“Make known the Word of God, to further the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, to facilitate fellowship among Christians, to provide Christian educational services including biblical research, written publications, and biblical teachings, and other charitable and religious purposes as the Board may deem appropriate.”

On May 3, 1989, an Articles of Amendment to the Articles of Corporation was filed which more specifically stated that Christian Educational Services was organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes as a “not-for-profit” organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Shortly after Christian Educational Services was formed, Robert Belt resigned. Then on November 12, 1989, Ralph Dubofsky and Susan Pierce resigned for personal reasons. It was at this same time that Mark Graeser and John Schoenheit were elected to the replace the vacant Board seats. In 1991, Tom Reahard resigned from the Board, separating from the organization over doctrinal concerns.

On February 4, 2005, Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc. was formed for the purpose of starting a “church.” The reason that new legal entity was created alongside of Christian Educational Services was so the existing “not-for-profit” standing of Christian Educational Services Incorporated would not be jeopardized as we moved in the direction of becoming a church. Application was subsequently submitted to the Internal Revenue Service to be recognized as a church, however it was ultimately rejected on the basis that we were actually operating as a “religious organization,” and not as a church. Intense self-examination showed us that the IRS had correctly understood the makeup of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, and that we were not constituted as a church, nor was the ministry doing things that churches did. One major difference, for example, was that Spirit & Truth Fellowship did not exercise governmental control over fellowships connected to it. Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc. has operated as an International ministry that is a para-church organization, and it supports local congregations through its efforts and services. Christian Educational Services, Inc. remains under the auspices of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc., as the publishing arm of the ministry.

## **Our Ministry Development**

From the incorporation of Christian Educational Services in 1988 until 1990 there was a general sorting and settling that occurred regarding the leadership and direction of our ministry. By the end of 1989 many of the original Board members had resigned and been replaced, resulting in John Lynn, Mark Graeser, and John Schoenheit being primarily responsible for the running of the ministry on a daily basis.

In these early years the ministry funds were limited and all parties worked on a volunteer basis. John Lynn traveled extensively and taught various pockets of former members of The Way International, living off their offerings and donations. John Schoenheit and Mark Graeser worked in secular jobs, devoting evenings and weekends to research, writing and teaching, as well as doing some limited traveling.

The original focus of Christian Educational Services was the publishing of Christian materials. In June of 1988, the following was printed in a national newsletter:

“C.E.S. will have no national membership and we do not intend to interfere with how your local fellowship operates. We want to encourage Bible studies and fellowship, but we do not want to run your life or living room.”

The 1990’s were in many ways a very entrepreneurial period in which Christian Educational Services, Inc. concentrated on developing assorted doctrinal products, in addition to outreach through the United States and internationally. This period of time was still very formative and a time of building as finances increased, products continued to be produced, and many new supporters found us. In addition to a few office staff, by the close of this decade all three Board members were full time employees of the ministry, allowing for greater effectiveness in research, teaching, and outreach. By the end of the 90’s, many people recognized that Christian Educational Services, Inc. was moving in the direction of becoming a more complete ministry package, rather than being primarily a Christian publisher.

In September of 2000 at the annual Leadership Conference many topics were discussed, but the dominant theme became spreading the responsibilities of leadership through the use of committees. This marked the beginning of a shift in leadership where others besides the three Board members began to be included in ministry leadership. In August of 2001 a meeting of approximately twenty individuals occurred at Earlham College in eastern Indiana for the purpose of reviewing the ministry vision and mission, examining the possibility of expanding the Board of Directors beyond three, and discussing a number of other topics related to the future direction of the ministry. The result of this meeting was the installation of two new Board members in the fall of 2001, Gary and Karen Theisen, and the introduction of ordaining men and women, thus establishing “clergy” within the ministry.

In September of 2001, in response to people’s desire for greater connection, Christian Educational Services launched the Network of Affiliated Fellowships to provide a framework in which the various fellowships in the United States could interact and support one another. Despite holding to the same general doctrine and practice, up until that time there were a number of fellowships without any connection to each other.

During the early 2000’s, under the leadership of Mark Graeser as President, efforts began to transform the ministry into a “church.” Up until this time Christian Educational Services had

acted primarily as a para-church organization, concentrating mostly on the support of the fellowships in the local areas while remaining distinctly separate from them. Since moving in the direction of actually becoming a church was such a significant directional shift, it was determined that the best way to accomplish this was to form a new entity. Thus, Spirit & Truth Fellowship International was birthed with the intention that Christian Educational Services, Inc., would transform itself into a church. Although Christian Educational Services would continue, it would do so as the publishing division of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc.

The desire to become a “church” was a righteous response for greater connection and relationship. Although Christian Educational Services had always promoted fellowshiping with others, the focus of the ministry, as stated in its Articles of Incorporation, was the promotion of right doctrine and what was often termed its “doctrinal package.” In the early 2000’s the emphasis began to become more balanced with the promotion of developing and nurturing fellowships. Then, in 2003 the ministry applied for church status with the Internal Revenue Service. We did not know at that time that doing so would have a huge impact on our local fellowships.

Traditionally Christian Educational Services, Inc. had always operated on the basis that “we do not intend to interfere with how your local fellowship operates.” In the process of moving towards becoming a “church,” we learned that being an actual church would mean we would need to install governmental control over fellowships that included systems of accountability. Doing that would have been in direct contrast to our longstanding commitment to our core value of liberty, and was therefore not acceptable. The heart of Spirit & Truth Fellowship is connection, not control. We desired to promote self-government of individual fellowships and yet be able to support them without the government-mandated control that we would have to have if we were a true “church” as defined by the IRS. As a result, in 2005 we received final word from the IRS that they had rejected our second attempt to be recognized as a church. They deemed that we were in fact a legitimate not-for-profit as a “religious organization,” that is, a ministry, or “para-church.” Spirit & Truth Fellowship remains a recognized tax-deductible organization in compliance with IRS section 501 (c) (3).

In 2007-2008 Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc. stopped its attempts to become a church in the eyes of the IRS, and returned to our original inspiration of the Fellowship Network being a non-governing entity, facilitated and administrated by Spirit & Truth Fellowship. At this time we continue to operate in a manner that is consistent with our mission statement, which is, “To research the truth of God’s Word, disciple people in the truth, and promote fellowship based on the truth.”

## **Leadership Changes**

Every organization goes through changes as it grows and develops. Sometimes the changes are the result of new direction, such as new doctrinal positions, and others have to do with natural leadership changes through time. Unfortunately, there are also instances when leadership changes can result in confusion for some people, and have a somewhat destabilizing effect. The following is a brief synopsis of the more significant leadership changes that we have experienced.

**1989**

Shortly after our legal formation, three of the five original Board members departed Christian Educational Services. They were Robert Belt, Susan Pierce & Ralph Dubofsky, and they resigned for personal and professional reasons.

**1992**

Tom Reahard resigned from the Board of Directors due to doctrinal concerns.

**2000**

John Lynn resigned from the Presidency for personal reasons. Mark Graeser was installed as President.

**2001**

Gary and Karen Theisen were elected to the Board of Directors.

**2003**

John Lynn resigned from the Board of Directors for personal reasons.

**2003**

Tom Resner was elected to the Board of Directors in September.

**2006**

Dan Gallagher was elected to the Board of Directors and installed as Chief Executive Office (CEO).

**2007**

John Schoenheit was elected President.

**2008**

Tom Resner resigned from the Board of Directors. Mark Graeser was voted off the Board of Directors.

**2009**

John Lynn separated from Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc.

Two of the most significant leadership changes that are fresh in many people's mind involve Mark Graeser and John Lynn.

**Mark Graeser**

Mark Graeser had served in numerous capacities through the years. Mark has many wonderful qualities, and is a very gifted minister, writer, and teacher. In 2000, Mark Graeser assumed the Presidency and served at the helm of this ministry until 2007.

In 2006 some differences that became apparent were changes in the direction of the ministry. In January of 2007, Mark was not re-elected as President, and in January of 2008, he was voted off the Board of Directors.

## **John Lynn**

John Lynn was one of the founding members of the Board of Directors and steered the ministry as its President from its inception until 2000. John was instrumental in the formation and development of Christian Educational Services and was the one primarily known as the “face of CES” as he traveled extensively throughout the United States. Additionally, John was effective in his evangelism of other countries, the most notable of which is the work in the Philippines.

For personal reasons, John resigned from the presidency in 2000, from the Board of Directors in 2003, and from the staff of Spirit & Truth Fellowship in 2005. He continued to provide some assistance and support on a part-time sub-contract basis through 2008. Due to personal and organizational differences between John and the Board of Directors in August 2009, he informed the leadership of his decision to separate from Spirit & Truth Fellowship.

# Our Strategies

Spirit & Truth Fellowship is accomplishing its mission by employing a number of strategies, which can be divided into those efforts that are of a doctrinal nature and those that are relationally oriented. We are very committed to not only teaching the truth, but to helping and encouraging people to put God's Word into practice in their own lives. From a practical or relational standpoint, we are placing a great emphasis on meeting together through fellowships and our various events.

## Our Strategies in Practice

### **The Fellowship Network**

In 2008, Spirit & Truth Fellowship made some significant changes regarding how it relates to various local fellowships. Previously it was being promoted that Spirit & Truth was becoming a church. In 2008 this concept was changed as we returned to our original vision of a network of fellowships. We believe this change is consistent with our core value of liberty, and promotes the concept of each fellowship or church being self-governing. It is the desire of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, Inc. to promote, nurture, and support fellowships.

### **Fellowship Network Description**

The Fellowship Network is an association of independent fellowships and churches that have come together for the purpose of their mutual benefit and support through connection with others who hold to the same beliefs and practice. The Fellowship Network is a non-governing entity and is facilitated and administrated by Spirit & Truth Fellowship International. All network participants are self-governing and retain all of the rights and responsibilities of their liberty in Christ.

### **Fellowship Network Benefits**

- Increased connection with other fellowships, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Expanded fellowship opportunities
- Service and participation in the Body of Christ in a larger arena than just the local fellowship
- Connection with other giftings not necessarily available in the local fellowship
- Opportunities for leadership development
- Pastoral care and counseling resources
- Doctrinal support and help understanding the Word and spiritual matters from likeminded believers
- Outreach on a scale beyond your local area
- Missionary opportunities
- Outlet for financial support to likeminded believers both nationally and internationally
- Opportunity for mutual support between fellowships
- Affords a greater avenue for intercession
- Internet advertising of local fellowships
- Referrals for those trying to find other likeminded believers
- Strength from being united to others
- Increased effectiveness in the spiritual battle

## **Personal Visits and Itineraries**

In addition to the Fellowship Network, we believe it is very important to support the believers in the local areas through personal visits and traveling itineraries. We are following the model of the first-century church, in which servant-leaders traveled and visited local fellowships.

## **Missions and International Outreach**

We continue to make significant movement forward in reaching the world with the truth of God's Word. One of the main ways we are reaching new contacts is via the Internet. We now have articles on the Internet in Arabic, Bahasa, Bengali, Cebuano, French, German, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Telegu, and Urdu. Additionally, many of our teachings are now being downloaded over the Internet for free by Podcast throughout the world. Spirit & Truth Fellowship International also continues to support international ministers and workers with approximately 10-12% of our total annual budget.

### **Livelihood projects:**

As part of our International outreach strategy, Spirit & Truth Fellowship funds income-generating projects through one-time grants, typically in the range of \$3,000 or less. As a leadership team becomes established in a third-world country, Livelihood Projects are identified and funded to provide an income stream for the believers, so that they can support themselves and fund the movement of the gospel in their country. The business venture is overseen and accountable to the Spirit & Truth Fellowship governmental body of that country. As the venture profits, the grant is repaid to that country's organization, and then those funds will be used to start new ventures. As this process succeeds, Spirit & Truth Fellowship International can begin to wean the leadership team of that country off of direct financial assistance and begin to make assistance available to leaders in new areas.

## **Our Events**

The following events are the ones Spirit and Truth Fellowship typically holds each year.

### **National Events**

National events are designed to serve the entire Spirit & Truth Fellowship faith community.

#### **Bible Study**

Our yearly Bible Study Seminar is usually held in the spring over a four-day period. Students are provided instruction in the use of the various tools available for Biblical research, and given the opportunity to do hands-on research on numerous topics with the purpose that they develop the skills necessary to become workmen of the Word.

#### **Live Out Loud**

Live Out Loud is the second teens and twenties event of the year and, although in many ways it seems to be a condensed version of our Teens & Twenties Camp, is always a time of great growth and fellowship. The event is concentrated into a few days and provides participants an opportunity to connect midway through the year. There are Bible-based teachings, workshops, small groups, and much time for fellowship.

### **Men's Camp**

Our Men's Camps have been times of great refreshing as men meet together. As is typical of all our events, there is time for teachings, workshops, small groups, free time, and evenings spent around campfires.

### **One Flesh**

The One Flesh Couples Conference is our married and engaged couples workshop in which couples are provided instruction, interactive exercises, and personal time to develop the tools required for successful Christian marriages.

### **Servant-Leaders Conference**

Our Servant-Leaders Conference is generally held in September of the year and is a special time for servant-leaders and prospective fellowship coordinators, as well as interested ministry stakeholders, to get together with the Board of Directors and discuss ministry matters. Meetings differ greatly due to the issues of concern at the time, but there is usually discussion about the needs of the ministry, its direction, programs being offered, and also discussion about various leadership development and outreach issues.

### **Silent Retreat**

The Silent Retreat is a four-day event that is designed to help individuals disconnect from the hectic pace of the world in order to spend quiet time with the Lord in prayer and in the Word.

### **Teen Counselor Training**

Our Teen Counselor Training is conducted in order to help equip our youth counselors for their participation at the Teens and Twenties Camp. Teen counselors help staff the Teen Camp as small group leaders and also greatly assist with the preparations of the facilities and the running of the event.

### **Teens & Twenties Camp**

The Teens and Twenties Camp is our annual youth event held at Camp Vision. Youth from all over the globe can come for one week of biblical study, praise and worship, and fellowship. A major purpose of the camp is to provide training in the study of the Bible, so that believers learn to "see for themselves" what the Bible says, instead of just relying on what someone else says it says. The participants are also given lots of opportunity for group interaction as well as outdoor camp recreational activities, campfires, and small groups.

### **Twenties Conference**

The Twenties Conference is a time when young adults meet to fellowship and address issues of the Christian faith specifically related to their age group. Participants are primarily responsible to plan and staff the event in an attempt to provide them the opportunity for leadership development and growth.

### **Women's Conference**

Women's Conferences are times when the women in our faith community come together for prayer, praise, fellowship, and worship, as well as encouragement, teachings, sharings, and workshops.

## **Regional Events**

Regional events are primarily held to serve a specific target audience in the local areas, which generally includes a multi-state area. Some of the regional events we have held in the past are listed below:

- Northwest (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California)
- West Coast (all Western states)
- Northeast (New England states)
- East Coast (all Eastern states)
- Southern (Texas and surrounding states)
- Central (Midwest states)

## **Our Strategies in Doctrine**

### **Our Publications**

We continue to make many additions to our publications and written works. We aim to make these available for free on the Internet, and our books and audio and video teachings can also be purchased from our bookstore.

### **Our Magazine**

*The Sower*, our bimonthly publication, is filled with cutting-edge Bible-based teachings, as well as information about upcoming events and news about the Fellowship Network and how to get better connected with us and other likeminded believers.

### **Books:**

- Don't Blame God! A Biblical Answer to the Problem of Evil, Sin, and Suffering*
- The Christian's Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*
- The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ*
- The Bible - You Can Believe It!*
- Prophecy: Understanding & Utilizing the Manifestation of Prophecy*
- Sex and Scripture: A Biblical Study of Proper Sexual Behavior*
- Is There Death After Life?*
- One God & One Lord: Reconsidering the Cornerstone of the Christian Faith*

### **Monthly Audio teachings**

Each month Spirit & Truth Fellowship produces a "Teaching of the Month" devoted to a specific topic.

### **YouTube Videos**

Spirit & Truth Fellowship is currently producing many videos for YouTube, which are 10 minutes or less in length. There are many different teachers doing the presenting, and many topics being presented. Some are doctrinal, some are practical, and some are inspirational. These videos can be viewed, or downloaded from the Internet, free of charge.

### **Seminars**

- Truth Matters: The Nature and Characteristics of Truth*
- New Life in Christ: Foundations for Powerful Christian Living*

*The Creation - Evolution Controversy*  
*A Journey Through the Old Testament*  
*The Book of Revelation*

## **Internet Resources**

Spirit & Truth Fellowship is utilizing three Internet websites to promote the gospel to the world. We have put a lot of effort into the development of our websites because they allow us to get the truth of God's Word into places that are traditionally hostile to Christianity.

### **STFonline.org**

Our ministry website describes who we are, and details our various products and services, hosting our bookstore and marketing, and describing our events.

### **TruthOrTradition.com**

This is our main doctrinal website which now hosts over 1300 articles covering hundreds of topics relevant to Christian lifestyle and beliefs. In 2008 we saw worldwide traffic increase on this website. It is now not unusual to have over 2,000 people a day visit this site. Many of our articles have now reached the top five spots on many search engines such as Google and Yahoo. Additionally, we continue to build the website in many different languages, and now have articles posted in Arabic, Bahasa, Bengali, Cebuano, French, German, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Telegu, and Urdu.

### **BiblicalUnitarian.com**

This is our website devoted to truths regarding the doctrinal positions held by Biblical Unitarians. These include who God is, who Jesus Christ is and what he is doing today, and what is the gift of holy spirit. It also includes answers to many questions people ask about Biblical Unitarianism and the doctrine of the Trinity.

## **Translation Projects**

We continue to work to translate our teachings and materials into other languages. To do so, we are very dependent upon a host of volunteers from all over the globe.

### **Revised English Version of the Bible® (REV) ®**

*The Revised English Version* is the ongoing multi-year Bible translation project that Spirit & Truth has been working on for the past eight years. The REV translation is sensitive to the doctrinal positions of the Biblical Unitarians, as well as being dispensational and charismatic. Developing alongside the REV is our commentary of the Bible, which explains some of the translation of the REV, and answers questions about the Bible in commentary form. Many people who have the question, "What does this verse mean?" can now get an answer simply by going to that verse in the online commentary. Both the REV and commentary can be downloaded and printed by going to [STFonline.org/rev](http://STFonline.org/rev)

# Our Governance Structure

## Manner of Governance

Since its inception, Spirit & Truth Fellowship has employed an episcopalian model of governance. At the risk of oversimplifying the many variations in how churches are governed, there are two basic models for governing churches and religious organizations. One is a congregational model and the other is an episcopalian model (from the Greek word, *episkopos*, “overseer”). In the congregational model, the power and authority of oversight is vested in the congregation, the people involved with the organization. In contrast, in the episcopalian model it is the overseers who are charged with the governance of the organization. As with all forms of government, there are strengths and weaknesses with both models.

The strength of the congregational model is that it generally prevents a centralization of power by allowing the congregation to determine the direction of the organization. This often produces a greater sense of “belonging,” because people feel that they have control over the ministry. Another advantage is that the organization is quicker to adapt to the changes in society, being more flexible and in-tune with social changes. Unfortunately, what makes a congregational model strong can also become its weakness since changes in the church to match the changes in society may not actually be beneficial to the cause of Christ. In most all cases where a congregational model was employed, it has been at the expense of doctrinal erosion due to the church elders being required to follow the directives of the majority of the members.

In a church or ministry that has an episcopalian model, the overseers or elders are empowered to run the church apart from the dictates of the congregation. There are many different ways that ministries have chosen to have their overseers appointed, but in every case it is the overseers who run the organization. The weakness of the episcopalian model is that, since a smaller group holds power, it can be out of touch with the needs of the organization, and change is generally slow to occur. The strength of this model is that since change occurs slowly, it tends to be a strong model from a doctrinal protection standpoint. It is primarily for this reason that Spirit & Truth Fellowship employs an episcopalian model.

Spirit & Truth Fellowship is governed by a Board of Directors and does not have a “membership.” Furthermore, Spirit & Truth uses what is referred to as a “self-perpetuating Board” model. “In the absence of membership, the governing Board may be self-perpetuating. That means the initial Board appoints its successors, and the process continues as new [Board] members are added” (*Legal Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* by Bruce Hopkins, 2009).

One of the lessons from Church history is that when a church or ministry turns the reins of its government over to the congregation, over time that organization drifts from its original purpose and beliefs. Therefore, when Spirit & Truth Fellowship was established, and as it has developed, the Board of Directors had to make a choice: is it more important to build an organization designed to protect the core beliefs and values of the organization, or to build one that is receptive to the voice of the people and thus changes over time as societal values and beliefs change? Considering the huge change in doctrine that has taken place in the history of the Church, it was deemed most important that the ministry structure of Spirit & Truth Fellowship be designed to protect its core beliefs and values.

## **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors' primary responsibility is to chart the direction of the ministry. They hold the final authority for the ministry's spiritual oversight and establishment of both ministry doctrine and practice. The Board makes fiscal decisions, sets general policies, and establishes ministry priorities. The ten basic responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:

1. Determine the mission and purpose of the ministry
2. Select the Chief Executive
3. Support and evaluate the chief executive
4. Monitor and strengthen programs and services
5. Ensure adequate financial resources
6. Protect assets and provide financial oversight
7. Build a competent board
8. Ensure legal and ethical integrity
9. Enhance the organization's public standing

## **Board Duties**

The Board of Directors is by law charged with three basic duties: Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, and Duty of Obedience. These basic duties rest upon the Board of Directors' fiduciary responsibilities and authority. Below is a brief description of these duties:

### **Duty of Care**

The duty of care requires that the directors be reasonably informed about the organization's activities, participate in decisions, and do so in good faith and with the care of an ordinary prudent person in similar circumstances.

### **Duty of Loyalty**

The duty of loyalty requires board members to exercise their power in the interest of the organization, not in their own interest or the interest of others. When acting on behalf of the organization, board members must put the interests of the organization before their personal and professional interests.

### **Duty of Obedience**

The duty of obedience requires that directors of nonprofits comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, adhere to the organization's bylaws, and remain the guardians of the vision and mission.

# Our Administrative Structure

The following is a description of the various administrative positions and duties.

## **President**

The President, subject to the general oversight of the Board of Directors, oversees the general affairs of the ministry and is responsible to protect the non-profit status of the ministry. The President keeps abreast of trends in the Christian Church and is responsible for final oversight of all the events and products of Spirit & Truth Fellowship. The President also pursues special projects, areas of new interest and development, and areas of special concern. The President works closely with the Chief Executive Officer.

## **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the oversight of the corporate affairs of the ministry, including its administration and operations. The CEO reports directly to the Board of directors and is responsible to keep the Board of Directors abreast of the daily operational and financial status of the ministry. In this capacity, he serves as liaison between the Board and staff and is responsible for the implementation of ministry policy. This includes the creation of corporate systems and processes, development of procedures, performance standards, and methods of accountability. The CEO works closely with an executive team who is comprised of key department heads. His duties include the administrative oversight of the Personnel, Finance, Publications, Fellowship Network, International Outreach, Events, Facilities, Camp Vision, and special projects.

## **Home Office Manager**

The Home Office Manager reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for the daily oversight of the Home Office. Duties include the direct supervision of the various Home Office departments including finances, staffing, coordination of volunteers, reception, data input, computer systems, information technology, purchasing, shipping and receiving, inventory control, and marketing.

## **Executive Assistant**

The Executive Assistant reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer. Responsibilities include the handling of the daily Fellowship Network correspondence, assisting with International Outreach, database updates as they relate to the Fellowship Network and the International Community. Additionally, he/she assists the CEO and President on special assignments and projects.

## **Committees**

The Board of Directors relies upon the advice of others for their expertise and input as it relates to focus areas. This is accomplished primarily through the use of Advisory Councils, Taskforces, and Committees. All such bodies are advisory in nature and are created with the intention of assisting the Board of Directors to be effective and efficient. The Board of Directors is currently reviewing all committees, their descriptions, and responsibilities.

## **Staff**

Often times the Spirit & Truth staff refers to themselves as “Gideon’s army,” a reference to the small number of people who are accomplishing great feats, but only because of the backing of the Lord. It is the dedication of the staff who go above and beyond the call of duty that make all we do possible.

### **Full-time Staff**

John Schoenheit	President
Dan Gallagher	Chief Executive Officer
Jeff Blackburn	Home Office Manager
Mike Patten	Executive Assistant
Janet Speakes	Finance and Administrative Support
Rachel Darr	Front Office and Administrative Support
Ryan Maher	Publications and Websites

### **Part-time Staff**

Dustin Williams	Finance and Publications
Travis Williams	Website Support
Austin Williams	Website Support
Dustin Speakes	Shipping and Receiving
Renee Speakes	Shipping and Receiving

### **Camp Vision Staff**

Ron & Jane Bickel	Camp Vision Custodians
Mike Patten	General Manager

### **Volunteers**

In addition to the above, great thanks must be given to the many men and women who donate innumerable hours of their personal time in the successful production of our events and materials.

# Our Directors and Officers

The following is a brief description of our Board members.

## **John Schoenheit - President**

John is married to Jenivee and lives in Bloomington, Indiana. The Schoenheits have three adult children and a grandchild. John has been researching the Bible for 40 years and works primarily in research, writing and teaching, as well as performing the various duties of the President. He has authored several books, and his teachings on audio and video are now viewed around the world via the Internet. He teaches on many biblical subjects at churches and conferences both in the USA and abroad, and also runs tours to Israel and the Mediterranean. His hobbies include hunting and fishing.

## **Gary Theisen - Vice President**

Gary Theisen is married to Karen, and father to five grown children. Gary is an anesthesiologist and has served on the Board of Directors since 2001. In addition to his duties as Vice President and as a Director, he and his wife Karen host a home-based church. He also enjoys traveling each year to Honduras as part of an annual medical mission trip. Gary enjoys coordinating marriage conferences and helps to organize the ministry's camps on marriage and the family. His hobbies include soccer, attending his children's numerous sporting events, and traveling.

## **Dan Gallagher - Chief Executive Officer & Treasurer**

Dan and Lori live in Martinsville, IN, the city in which the Home Office is located. Dan and Lori have four daughters and eight grandchildren. In 2004 Dan retired from a twenty-six year career as a successful business owner and moved to Indianapolis to assist the ministry. Dan has served on the Board of Directors since 2006, and as the Treasurer he oversees the ministry finances and operations. Additionally, as the CEO he is responsible for all ministry administration, international and domestic outreach, the Fellowship Network, events, publications, personnel, Camp Vision, and the Home Office. His hobbies include building, woodworking, motorcycling, his dogs, and traveling.

## **Karen Theisen - Secretary**

Karen Theisen is married to Gary, and mother to five grown children. Karen and her husband pastor a church in their home in Hickory Corners, Michigan. Karen has her Master of Arts in Counseling and works as a therapist. She has served in various capacities on the Board of Directors since 2001. Karen is very dedicated to the promotion of strong Christian marriages and she has been very involved with Spirit & Truth Fellowship International's Teens & Twenties Camp, as well as camps and conferences on marriage and family. Her hobbies include reading, traveling, and swimming.

## **Mike Patten**

Mike is currently in a "mentoring year" as a prospective Board Member. Mike and his wife Mary moved from South Bend, Indiana, where they had resided for 25 years and where they were very active in the development and oversight of Michiana Christian Fellowship, in addition to other local church activities. The Pattens have three grown children and a grandson. They reside in Martinsville, Indiana, near the home office of Spirit & Truth Fellowship. Mike currently coordinates the Fellowship Network, is the Events Director, and General Manager of Camp Vision.

# Our Facilities

In 2008 Spirit & Truth Fellowship acquired its third property with the purchase of an office building in Martinsville, Indiana, which now serves as our Home Office.

## **Martinsville Home Office**

The Martinsville property was purchased in 2008 and is a 2,000 square foot commercial office building located on one acre. The building was purchased with the intention that it would be expanded so that all the staff and all administrative functions could be performed from one central location. The plans were for the facility to be remodeled in three phases. Phases One and Two have been completed, which allowed for us to consolidate our Home Office staff into one location. Doing so in August of 2009 has already resulted in tremendous increase in efficiency and cohesion amongst our staff.

## **Indianapolis Home Office**

Spirit & Truth Fellowship has since moved from its Indianapolis Home Office building and is currently marketing it for sale. This building reached its limit of effectiveness due to space constraints and its distance from operations at Camp Vision, which is located approximately 60 miles south on the north side of Bloomington, Indiana.

## **Camp Vision**

Camp Vision is an approximately 30-acre facility located twenty minutes south of the Martinsville property and nine miles north of Bloomington. It is situated in the beautiful limestone hills of southern Indiana and is where the ministry conducts many of our events. Spirit & Truth Fellowship intends to continue to make improvements such as additional housing, bath facilities, classrooms, a lodge, and meeting places throughout the grounds. At this time the camp is closed during the winter but we plan to make improvements so it can be used throughout the year.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Regarding our Governance

### Question 1:

#### How many people serve on the Board of Directors?

The bylaws stipulate that the Board can have up to seven members. The number of Board members has fluctuated through the years and has had as few as three members to as many as six. Currently the Board has four members and our intent is to expand to five in 2010. Since its inception in 1989, there have been eight different Boards overseeing the ministry.

1. From 1988 to 1989, the Board consisted of five members: Robert Belt, Ralph Dubofsky, John Lynn, Susan Pierce, and Thomas Reahard.
2. In 1989 Robert Belt, Ralph Dubofsky, and Susan Pierce resigned and Mark Graeser and John Schoenheit were added, so the Board had four members.
3. In 1991, Tom Reahard resigned from the Board, so it had three members, and continued with those three until 2001.
4. In the fall of 2001, Gary and Karen Theisen were added to the Board, so it then consisted of five members: Mark Graeser, John Lynn, John Schoenheit, Gary Theisen, and Karen Theisen
5. In the fall of 2003, John Lynn took a leave of absence from the Board and was never reinstated, so for a few months the Board consisted of four members: Mark Graeser, John Schoenheit, Gary Theisen, and Karen Theisen
6. In September 2003, Tom Resner was added to the Board, so it consisted of five members: Mark Graeser, Tom Resner, John Schoenheit, Gary Theisen, and Karen Theisen.
7. In January of 2006, Dan Gallagher was added to the Board, so it consisted of six members: Dan Gallagher, Mark Graeser, Tom Resner, John Schoenheit, Gary Theisen, and Karen Theisen.
8. In January of 2007, Tom Resner resigned and Mark Graeser was removed from the Board, so it consisted of four members: Dan Gallagher, John Schoenheit, Gary Theisen, and Karen Theisen.

In 2007 Mark Graeser sued John Lynn, Jeff Blackburn, and Dan Gallagher. He also threatened to sue the ministry and the remaining Board members individually. Spirit & Truth Fellowship's legal counsel advised us not to alter the composition of the Board at that time because it would place any new member under threat of lawsuit. The Board did not consider that threat removed until August of 2008.

In January of 2009 the Board began a one-year mentoring program for Mike Patten, who may be voted onto the Board in 2010. The Board hopes to mentor more people for Board positions in the future.

## **Question 2:**

### **How are Board members selected?**

The Bylaws of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International stipulate that before being voted to the Board of Directors, a candidate must have the following qualifications:

1. A meek attitude; willingness to be open about weaknesses and needs; not committed to personal privacy at the expense of truthfulness; full of faith.
2. Expertise and abilities matching the spiritual and/or functional needs of the ministry (e.g., evangelism, administration, finance, network/fellowship, etc.).
3. Lifestyle commensurate with the requirements for overseers and deacons according to 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9.
4. Age 40 or older; 10 years active involvement in the community.
5. Faithful financial contributor to the Corporation for a three (3) year period prior to election.
6. Has demonstrated an understanding of and commitment to the Corporation's doctrinal positions, statement of beliefs, mission, vision, and values.
7. Has demonstrated a commitment to serving God's people and operates in a ministry that is recognized by the community of believers.

## **Question 3:**

### **How are Board members elected?**

As a self-perpetuating Board, the sitting Board elects new board members. Spirit & Truth Fellowship International is an Indiana not-for-profit corporation and, although we do have Partners and contributors, there are no stockholders or "members." Spirit & Truth Fellowship exists in large part to promote its mission<sup>1</sup> and vision.<sup>2</sup> Most of the things we teach and activities we promote are done without continuing oversight or control, and often free of charge or at a nominal fee. This is attractive to many people who want to see the Word of God available to the world, and who support us because of what we are doing. Many of those who support Spirit & Truth Fellowship only partially agree with our mission, vision, or core values and doctrine.

As we discussed in the section, "Our Governance Structure" on pages 13 and 14, there are pros and cons to every system of governance, and the model we operate by is the one most likely to protect our ministry's vision and mission, as well as our doctrine and practice. One of the lessons of history is that when a Christian church (or ministry) turns the reigns of its government over to people who may or may not fully support the vision and mission of the organization, over time, that organization drifts from its original purpose and beliefs. Therefore, when Spirit & Truth Fellowship was established, and as it has developed over time, the Board of Directors had to make a choice: is it more important to build an organization designed to protect the core beliefs and values of the organization, or to build one that is receptive to the voice of the people and thus changes over time as societal values and beliefs change. Considering the huge change in

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<sup>1</sup> "To provide sound, biblically-based teaching and training to equip and empower Christians, and to facilitate a network of likeminded individuals, fellowships, and churches."

<sup>2</sup> "Building an enduring work of truth."

doctrine that has taken place in the history of the Church, it was deemed most important that the corporate structure of Spirit & Truth be designed to protect its core beliefs and doctrines.

**Question 4:**  
**Are there plans to expand the current Board?**

There are plans to expand the current Board. Mike Patten has been in a mentoring role during 2009. The bylaws provide for a maximum of 7 Board members and it is expected that others will be mentored onto the Board in the future.

**Question 5:**  
**Could the Board be immediately expanded to seven members?**

A member of the Board of Directors of Spirit & Truth Fellowship is faced with responsibility and pressure. It is only fair to individuals considering a position on the Board that they have a mentoring year in which they get to experience firsthand what is involved with being on the Board. It may turn out that after experiencing some of what being on the Board is like, they conclude the position is not right for them. Having a mentoring year also is wise for the organization. Not everyone who at first seems fit for the pressures of leadership turns out to be able to handle them well.

Board members face many pressures that are not always obvious. There are many long conference calls (we average two per month at usually 2 ½ to 3 hours each) and many more short calls and emails. The Board has a week-long annual meeting (traditionally held in January) and often has a fall meeting as well, and Board members are expected to help with many of the camps and conferences held by Spirit & Truth Fellowship. Thus, being a member of the Board of Directors places unexpected pressures on personal time. Beyond that, and not as visible, are the hours of prayer and thought about the issues before the Board. Long after phone calls and meetings are over, there are hours in thought and prayer, and it seems that every year there are some issues that weigh so heavily upon Board members that there are sleepless nights. Another pressure is the personal risk that one has by being a Board member of a not-for-profit, a risk that each of us acutely felt when recently the organization, and each Board member personally, was threatened with lawsuits.

Board members desire to be well-pleasing to Jesus Christ, and thus there is always the spiritual pressure to walk by wisdom and the spirit of God so that Spirit & Truth Fellowship is doing exactly what God and Christ would have it to do. Also, the situations the Board often faces are complex, and the decisions are weighty, and often there is long discussion and disagreement among the members about what action is the proper one in any given situation. A member of the Board has to be able to discuss emotional issues and yet not develop any misgivings or doubts about the other Board members, even when they disagree.

Beyond the issue of ensuring that becoming a member of the Board is right for both the organization and the individual, a member needs to understand the issues before the Board before he or she can act on them in a godly way. Having a mentoring year of non-voting participation insures that each new member has an understanding of what issues the Board is dealing with, and how to best handle those issues. It also gives prospective Board members time to read and familiarize themselves with previous Board issues and the documents by which the organization is governed.

**Question 6:****How is a member of the Board of Directors removed?**

According to the Bylaws of Spirit & Truth Fellowship, any member of the Board of Directors can be removed at any time by a supermajority (2/3) vote of the sitting Board.

**Question 7:****How are Board members held accountable?**

The Board is legally accountable to the state of Indiana as a not-for-profit Indiana corporation, and to the Internal Revenue Service for proper financial handling of the tax-deductible donations it receives. Additionally, a contributor can hold the Board accountable for its actions via his or her contributions.

The Board also has measures for holding its members accountable. Each Board member serves a two-year term (with the exception of the founding member, John Schoenheit), after which time he or she has to be re-nominated by the Board and then has to be re-elected into office by a majority vote of the sitting Board. Furthermore, any Board member can be removed from the Board at any time by a supermajority (2/3) vote.

**Question 8:****How does the Board of Directors guard against partiality and conflict of interest?**

One of the legal duties of the Board of Directors is the Duty of Loyalty. This duty requires that the Board members always act in the best interest of the organization and not in their own interests or the interests of others. This requires that the Board does its best to act against personal bias or preferences. As a not-for-profit Christian corporation, Spirit & Truth Fellowship survives mainly on donations due to its choice to make most of its audio, video, and written material free of charge on the web. Thus, at all times the contributors have the ability to exert influential pressure on the Board via their contributions. This is true not only of Spirit & Truth, but of many not-for-profit organizations. Contributors can, and should, hold the Board accountable to be true to the core values and beliefs of the corporation, which should be why they supported the corporation in the first place. They can do this by requiring transparency in such things as financial reports, and also by monitoring the quality and quantity of the work being produced by the organization.

**Question 9:****How does the Board handle those who disagree with its actions or positions?**

Spirit & Truth Fellowship International is a ministry with employees, contract laborers, and volunteers, and like any employer, we have standards that we must uphold for those in a professional relationship with us. There have been times in the past that we have had to release a worker or contract laborer, or refuse a volunteer. Each situation is different and must be judged by its own merits. Occasionally someone who worked with us becomes disgruntled and speaks or acts in a derogatory way that is destructive or divisive to our ministry. In those situations we reserve the right, as does any organization, to exclude that individual from the activities of our organization such as camps or conferences. In fact, Spirit & Truth Fellowship has the right to exclude anyone who is divisive and argumentative from our activities, just as any other organization has.

It has always been the position of Spirit & Truth Fellowship that we try to answer questions and work out differences. Even when someone is not satisfied with the Board and the actions of Spirit & Truth Fellowship, if they are not divisive, we desire to see them remain in the faith community and become an active part of a local fellowship.

Spirit & Truth Fellowship does not exercise control over any of its faith community, or meetings held by those in our faith community, even if the meeting is of a fellowship in our Fellowship Network listed on our website. Therefore, even if we terminate a business relationship with a person, we have no authority to exclude him or her from anyone's fellowship meeting. In the twenty-one years we have been a not-for-profit ministry there have occasionally been people who have become upset with us for all kinds of reasons, and subsequently asked to be removed from our mailing list. Nevertheless, a lot of them come back, for reasons as diverse as their reasons for leaving in the first place. Therefore, we see great wisdom in encouraging people who no longer work for Spirit & Truth Fellowship, and those who do not like something that Spirit & Truth Fellowship has done or taught, to remain on our mailing list and in our faith community.

# **“Frequently Asked Questions”**

## **Regarding the Prophetic**

### **Question 1:**

#### **What is Spirit & Truth Fellowship’s position on the prophetic?**

In November of 2008, the Board of Directors and guests met to discuss at length the topic of prophecy and the prophetic. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a proper doctrinal understanding and healthy practical application of the prophetic in order that a comprehensive ministry policy can eventually be implemented. We recognize that despite the tremendous blessing that the prophetic has been to many, there have been instances in which individuals have received questionable prophetic words. It is our desire that teaching and training on the prophetic can be provided to our faith community so we can walk in the blessing that God intends it to be.

The subject of prophecy and the prophetic is a large and complex one, and there are many things that must be addressed to cover it well. In the meeting, we made a list of areas that we felt were important to research, discuss, and then publically address.

- The power of the prophetic word
- The manifestation of prophecy versus the ministry of a prophet
- Pastoring and mentoring prophetic people
- The importation of prophetic practices and understandings from other ministries; both the right and wrong that others do and how it affects Spirit & Truth Fellowship International
- Prophetic blessings and curses
- Demonic influences and infiltration that can occur via the prophetic and how to prevent it
- Differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament in regards to prophecy
- Properly understanding how the human body, the soul (mind and emotions), and the spirit each impact revelation and the prophetic message
- The role wisdom plays regarding prophecy
- Prophetic pitfalls (character, lack of accountability)
- “Personal” prophecy versus “corporate” prophecy
- Proper prophetic checks and balances in the Body of Christ

### **Conclusions:**

We recognize that the Lord has gifted certain individuals in the Body of Christ with the ministry of a prophet. As such, we have no desire to limit or hinder the Lord with regard to the blessing that the prophetic can provide. Additionally, we desire to walk with great wisdom in this area.

**The following understandings are recognized and adopted:**

1. Prophetic words are spiritually energized and must be handled with great respect and care, and therefore, prophetic checks and balances must be operated which will include the following:
  - The prophetic must work in connection and in harmony with the greater Body of Christ, and more specifically with the other four equipping ministries (apostles, teachers, pastors, and evangelists).
  - The prophetic should generally work in harmony with the wisdom model, which helps dictate that there is safety in a multitude of counselors.
  - The prophetic must work in a manner that is consistent with the honoring of the governmental authority of the ministry.
  - All who provide “prophetic words” are responsible for their words. Similarly, those who receive a “prophetic word” are responsible to accept or reject those words as they personally determine.
2. Spirit & Truth Fellowship will no longer refer to, or distinguish, prophecy as being a “personal word” versus a “corporate word.” Rather, a prophecy will merely be called a prophetic word.
3. Conferences and events will have “ministering teams” for prayer, counseling, healing, deliverance, and prophecy instead of promoting “prophecy teams” who do only prophecy.
4. Prophetic ministers who are recognized as mature by the fruit in their lives are free to minister as the Lord directs them throughout the STF community, and they will be accountable to the ministry leadership for their actions.

**This report is available online at [STFonline.org/2009report](http://STFonline.org/2009report)**