

Soma Family of Ministries

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Setting the solitary into families

“God sets the solitary in families” (Psalm 68:6a NKJV)



“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

1 Corinthians 14:40

June, 2004

Soma Family of Ministries
P. O. Box 913
Chillicothe, Ohio

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SECTION ONE THE HISTORY OF SOMA

The foundation for Soma was first laid in the fall of 1998 when the elders of New Hope Church in Pickerington, Ohio and the leadership of Open Door Christian Fellowship in Chillicothe, Ohio began meeting periodically for mutual encouragement, accountability and prayer. This relationship continued for several years while the vision for Soma was being nurtured in the hearts and minds of the men and women who participated. Meanwhile, other churches and ministries were being birthed from this fellowship, finding their spiritual home in the Soma family.

“Soma”

The Greek word used in scripture for “body.” We are, therefore, the Body (Soma) of Christ.

Sensing the need to expand fellowship, other pastors were invited to share in Soma’s rich fellowship. Several pastors answered the invitation and soon began meeting together once a month in the spring of 2001. Soma continued to grow as a loose affiliation of pastors, churches and ministries until the end of 2003 when it was decided that in order to fulfill God’s vision for Soma, more administration was needed. After laying the groundwork for the Soma as an organization, the original Leadership Council was selected and became the initial trustees of the Soma Family of Ministries, Inc. in the spring of 2004. These five people were **Mark and Nicki Pfeifer** (Open Door Fellowship, Chillicothe, Ohio), **Troy and Mandy Ervin** (Kingsway Fellowship, Cincinnati, Ohio), **Ron and Marilyn Grubb** (Lancaster Community Church, Lancaster, Ohio), **Steve and Pat Harrop** (Cornerstone Church, Duncan Falls, Ohio), and **Tom and Johna Thompson** (Refuge Ministries, McArthur, Ohio).

The founding leadership team unanimously recognized Mark Pfeifer as the Lead Apostle of Soma from its official inception in 2004. He is a member in good standing with the International Coalition of Apostles, overseen by C. Peter Wagner and received his apostolic commissioning from John P. Kelly.

“Soma is a family of ministries offering encouragement, order and covering to its members by the operation of the five-fold ministry through a network of spiritual parents.”

SOMA Family of Ministries Mission Statement
Adopted February, 2004

SECTION TWO THE PURPOSE OF SOMA

Purpose Statement for Soma:

“Soma is a family of ministries offering encouragement, order and covering to its members by the operation of the five-fold ministry through a network of spiritual parents.”

Soma is a family of ministries.

Using the family as a model, Soma is a fellowship of ministries who gives and receives life from one another. The Psalmist declares *“God sets the solitary in families”* (**Psalm 68:6a NKJV**). It is our goal, therefore, to provide a place where people are nurtured and grown, giving life to subsequent generations of believers and ministries.

We believe that spiritual parents produce spiritual children. In keeping with that concept, we believe that every pastor needs a pastor. The basis of our unity, therefore, rests in our ability to relate to one another as a family instead of members of an organization. The core of Soma’s existence is relational.

Soma is a fellowship of ministries that brings order to life.

As the vine and branches work together to bring forth fruit, Soma promotes the expression of life through each individual ministry. Soma is structured in such a way as to enhance each ministry’s connection of life from vine to vine, recognizing and promoting the individuality of each ministry. As the arbor is to the grapevine, so is Soma to the ministries it serves.

Soma is a group of individual ministries.

We recognize that each ministry is unique. We believe that there should be freedom for every ministry to express their own individual gifts and calling within their respective communities. We, therefore, celebrate our uniqueness and see our individuality as the strength of our fellowship.

Soma is an affiliation of ministries focused on growth.

We believe that each ministry should be encouraged to express their reproductive nature. This brings regenerative life to the vine and allows each ministry to give birth and expand their influence. It is our aim, therefore, to govern Soma in such a way as to allow capable ministries to be raised up and used by God to create new families as God allows.

Soma is an association of ministries using a Biblical model of ministry.

We see the roles of all five offices mentioned in **Ephesians 4:11-16** as being vital for the *“equipping the saints for the work of ministry”* and *“for the edifying the body of Christ.”* We further believe that the

maturity of the Body of Christ also mentioned in this passage is impossible without the functioning of all five of Christ's ministry gifts to His church.

We believe it is vital for us, as leaders in the church, to accept this paradigm of ministry and recognize the role of teachers, pastors, evangelists, prophets and apostles in our midst. We gladly, therefore, participate in establishing and functioning within this biblical model, seeing no need of excluding any of these offices from the church.

Having been given these offices by Christ, we feel it necessary, therefore, to use the terms given to us by our Lord. While not confusing the "office of apostle" with the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who hold special honor on earth and in heaven (see: **Revelation 21:14**), we see no need of abandoning this term when used to describe the office of "*one who is sent from God with special abilities to birth and/or oversee ministries with a parent's heart.*"

Soma provides safety within a structure of accountability.

We believe that each minister is kept safe and alive within a framework of accountability. We should all seek to find a place that provides benevolent authority within the context of parenthood that keeps us safe like children within a family.

Soma provides apostolic alignment.

We believe that it is important for every ministry to be in relationship with apostolic covering for the practical purpose of functioning within accountability and also for the purpose of receiving the full blessings of God that come from staying relevant with present moves of God as He restores the operation of the five-fold ministry to the church.

Soma provides a place of love and friendship among a family.

Many ministers feel like they are alone on an island. It is the goal of Soma to provide long lasting and loving relationships not unlike that of a family. Soma is relational based not organizational based.

Soma provides an avenue for strategic vision.

We believe the biblical model of building God's Kingdom is one of strategy and purpose. Starting in Jerusalem and spreading to the ends of the earth, the church fulfilled Christ's plan laid out in **Acts 1:8**. Therefore, it is our aim to provide a vision for strategic efforts in reaching to the nations of the earth. This offers unique opportunities for pastors to participate in ministry throughout the United States and abroad.

Soma provides a place of larger identity.

We believe that it is healthy for individual ministers and congregations to maintain a corporate identity larger than themselves. It is our goal to supply an identity as a group that supersedes and yet enhances each local congregation's ministry.

Soma provides a catalyst for spiritual development and growth

We believe in the principles of impartation. Under God's sovereign hand, spiritual blessings can be reproduced and shared within a corporate people in much the same way as DNA is passed from parents to their children. For this reason Paul reminded Timothy of the gifts of God that were given to him by the laying on of his own hands and of those of the eldership (**I Timothy 4:14 & II Timothy 1:6**). Soma creates a framework where spiritual blessings can be imparted and regenerated throughout the fellowship, creating a corporate life not unlike that which Paul describes in **I Corinthians 12:27**.

SECTION THREE
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

The undersigned, desiring to form a corporation, not for profit, under Section 1702.01 et seq., Revised Code of Ohio, do hereby state the following articles:

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of the corporation shall be **The Soma Family of Ministries**, hereafter referred to in this document as the Ministry.

ARTICLE II
PLACE OF OFFICE

The place in Ohio where the principal office is to be located shall be in the city of Chillicothe, Ohio, Ross County.

ARTICLE III
PURPOSE

The purpose for which said Ministry is formed shall be to help organize and promote unity among a number of churches using any and all forms of Christian education, including teaching and preaching the gospel, writing and publishing, Bible Studies, fellowship, public gatherings, spiritual counseling, ordinations, music and any other activities to build the Body of Christ; to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; to receive offerings; and to otherwise engage in any and all activities permitted to be done under Chapter 1702, Revised Code of Ohio.

ARTICLE IV
RESTRICTIONS

Said Ministry is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

No part of the net earnings of the Ministry shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the Ministry shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof.

No substantial part of the activities of the Ministry shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Ministry 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.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the Ministry shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (3) (c) of the Internal Revenue Code, corresponding section of any further federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

**ARTICLE V
DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the Ministry, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to be a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Ministry is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

SECTION FOUR GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

ARTICLE I. SOMA LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

A. Just as elders have the primary oversight of each local congregation, Soma Family of Ministries, Inc. (hereafter referred to only as Soma) shall be governed by a plurality of apostolically gifted men who shall sit on the Soma Leadership Council. Their responsibilities shall include doing whatever is necessary to look after the general affairs of the organization as well as promoting unity, edification, accountability and fellowship among participating Soma Members and Ministries.

B. The Leadership Council shall consist of no less than three (3) and may include whatever number of Members may be necessary to carry out their stated responsibilities.

C. There shall be one President of the Council or “Lead Apostle” and one Vice-President. The President’s duties shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, calling meetings to order, providing leadership within the council, communicating necessary information to the other council members and generally overseeing and providing vision for the greater Soma fellowship. Should an even split among the Members of the Leadership Council occur when an issue is considered where a majority opinion is called for in this document, the President shall provide the final decision. The President shall have the primary financial oversight of Soma and shall be responsible for any and all financial decisions made within the Ministry. In the event that the President cannot fulfill his duties, the Vice-President shall assume and fulfill the duties of the President for as long as necessary. Appointment to said offices shall be the responsibility of the Leadership Council with a majority opinion.

D. Consideration for any appointments made to the Leadership Council, subsequent to the original appointment of Members, must begin with a recommendation from at least one Member of the Leadership Council. After said appointment has been considered in prayer by all the Members of the Council for a period of at least thirty (30) days following the initial recommendation, a majority of the Council Members may place the Appointee in office.

E. The qualifications of all Members of the Leadership Council shall include both gifts and character. The visible evidence of a person’s apostolic gifting shall be considered using the following definition as a guide, *“one who is sent from God with special abilities to birth and/or oversee ministries with a parent’s heart.”* Members shall also meet the character standards set forth in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and in **Titus 1:5-9** pertaining to elders.

F. An appointment to the Leadership Council, including the offices of President and Vice-President, is considered permanent unless or until a Member willingly steps down or is dismissed from office.

G. With **Matthew 18:15-20** as our basis of action, a Member of the Leadership Council may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds majority of the remaining Members if they believe that the offending Member is in violation of the conduct ascribed in the previous scriptures concerning character qualifications of elders, has been accused by more than one party, given ample opportunity to speak in their defense before the Leadership Council and has refused to repent. If the Members of the Leadership Council witness true repentance, then the Leadership Council will deal at their discretion with the offending Member, after much prayer, according to the guidelines of **Galatians 6:1-5**. Should a Member be dismissed, such an order would be made public to the Covenant Members of Soma.

H. The Soma Leadership Council shall meet regularly unless advanced notice has been otherwise given that such a meeting has been either postponed or canceled. The Members may also conduct a telephone meeting or take advantage of any electronic means to poll members of the Leadership Council by means of a conference call, by individual phone calls or my another electronic means of communication for the purpose of soliciting opinions by the various Members when a majority decision is called for in matters outlined in this document, so long as a legitimate attempt to reach all parties has been made, a thorough explanation of the issues discussed has been given and a majority decision has been reached. Any action taken by such telephonic means shall have the same force and effect as any action of the Leadership Council, and a record of such meeting shall be made a part of the minutes of the Leadership Council.

ARTICLE II. APOSTOLIC OVERSEERS

A. The term, “Apostolic Overseer” describes a person who has birthed at least one ministry or one person into ministry, besides his or her own, and operates in an on-going relationship with that ministry or minister as an overseer. They shall “pastor” this ministry or minister by helping to edify and enhance their ministry in every way possible.

B. Apostolic Overseers shall fit the definition of *“one who is sent from God with special abilities to birth and/or oversee ministries with a parent’s heart”* for the pastors, churches and ministries under their care.

C. A person shall be recognized as an Apostolic Overseer by the Soma Leadership Council when they have met the requirements of an Apostolic Overseer as defined above in Section A.

D. The duties of an Apostolic Overseer within the Soma network may include but are not necessarily limited to the following items:

- Provide resources when necessary
 - Edify, comfort and exhort leaders
 - Offer on-going training
 - Provide accountability
 - Serve as an arbitrator should disagreements arise
 - Help fill vacancies in the ministries under their care
 - Offer insights, support and advice
 - Equip and edify pastors with regularly scheduled meetings
-

Represent Soma at any special services

E. Recognizing the fact that existing Covenant Ministries or Ministers wishing to join the Soma Family of Ministries may have no relationship with an existing Apostolic Overseer in the network, the Leadership Council will extend itself to these Ministries to serve them in the same capacity as an Apostolic Overseer. In time, one of the Council Members as per the request of the inquiring Ministry may perform this service on permanent basis at which time said ministry shall be considered a member of that Council Member's Apostolic Family.

ARTICLE III. APOSTOLIC FAMILIES

A. The term, "Apostolic Family" is the name given to a group of Churches, Ministers or Ministries overseen by a particular Apostolic Overseer.

B. These Apostolic Families may consist of Ministers and Ministries birthed by a single Apostolic Overseer or be comprised of those who have willingly brought themselves into a relationship with a particular Apostolic Overseer or of their choosing.

C. Any existing Minister or Ministries wishing to affiliate with Soma will be given the option of joining a particular Apostolic Family of their choosing or looking to the Leadership Council for such services as described above concerning the ministry of an Apostolic Overseer.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. Any relationship with Soma is strictly voluntary and shall be considered ongoing unless a Person, Ministry or Church willingly removes themselves from participation or is asked to withdraw by the Leadership Council.

B. Soma understands that both ministers and ministries/churches may wish to join Soma separately. Therefore, Soma recognizes both ministers and ministries/churches independently from one another and will afford opportunities to participate to both parties.

C. Soma recognizes two levels of participation in the network. First, ministers and ministries/churches wishing to be included in open Soma gatherings can participate on the *Fellowship Level* without receiving the full benefits that Soma has to offer. Ministers and Ministries/churches wishing to participate on a governmental level with Soma, receiving the full benefits of a relationship with Soma, will become part of the Soma Family of Ministries on a *Covenant Level*.

D. In order for any Person, Ministry or Church to join with Soma on a Covenant Level, the Leadership Council must first receive a recommendation from an existing Member of Soma.

E. Upon receiving a request of Membership, the Leadership Council shall appoint the inquiring minister or ministry/church in place as a Covenant Member after a period of no earlier

than 30 days and no later than three months from the time of the initial recommendation.

F. With **Matthew 18:15-20** as our basis of action, a Member of the Soma may be dismissed from Covenant Membership by a majority of the Leadership Council, under the advise of the offending Member's Apostolic Overseer (Spiritual Father) if applicable, if it is believed that the offending Member is in violation of the conduct ascribed in the previous scriptures pertaining to the character of elders, has been accused by more than one party, given ample opportunity to speak in their defense before the Council and has refused to repent. If the Members of the Leadership Council witness true repentance, then the Leadership Council, along with the person's Apostolic Overseer (Spiritual Father) if applicable, shall deal with the offending Member appropriately, after much prayer, according to the guidelines of **Galatians 6:1-5**. Should a Member be dismissed, such an order would be made public to the General Membership of Soma.

G. Any and all such disciplinary actions involving a Soma Covenant Member will include the participation of that person's Apostolic Overseer, if applicable, as an advisor to the Leadership Council for that particular case.

H. Soma Covenant Members must agree with the statement of Faith set forth in this document under Section Four of this document.

ARTICLE V FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION

A. Soma Covenant Members are asked to participate financially in the Soma Family of Ministries with the understanding that any and all guidelines found in this document are to be understood as suggested ways to participate financially in Soma and not as requirements.

B. Soma Covenant Members are asked to consider tithing their personal income to Soma or giving an equivalent amount from their church's general budget. These funds will be held in an account under the responsibility the Leadership Council and used for the benefit of each Apostolic Family.

C. The second financial consideration for Soma Members is that every Ministry and Church in Soma considers designating one Sunday a year to receive special offerings for Soma. All of these funds will be sent to the general office and will be used to serve the General Covenant Membership of Soma.

D. Tithes received from Covenant Members belonging to a particular Apostolic Family will be held in reserve by the Leadership Council for the benefit of that Apostolic Family from whom they are received less 10% which will be assigned to the general Soma budget to offset the expenses of the general fund. The Apostolic Overseer of that Family from whom tithes have been received, shall have the right to request a withdraw of whatever funds necessary to serve the Covenant Members of his/her Apostolic Family.

E. It shall be the responsibility of the President of the Leadership Council to insure financial accountability for all Soma funds used in the network. Therefore, any distribution of funds from Soma accounts for the benefit of Apostolic Families must receive approval from President of the

Leadership Council with a written record of such distribution of funds being kept for the benefit of the Leadership Council to be reviewed periodically at their discretion. The same procedure described herein for distributing funds for Apostolic Families applies to any and all funds used for the benefit of the General Membership of Soma, as well.

**ARTICLE VI.
PROPERTY**

A. The Members of the Soma Leadership Council shall have the authority to acquire, hold, own, sell, assign, transfer, mortgage, pledge or otherwise dispose of property, both real and personal. Title to all property, whether real or personal, acquired by the corporation shall reside in the name of the corporation.

B. Such transfer shall happen only with the consent of a majority of the Members of the Leadership Council after such purchase has been adequately discussed at an Annual Meeting of the General Membership of Soma or at a Special Meeting of the General Membership.

**ARTICLE VII.
FISCAL YEAR**

The corporation's fiscal year shall begin on the first day of January in each year and shall end on the last day of December next following.

**ARTICLE VIII.
AMENDMENTS**

A. Any provision of this document may be amended by a majority of the Members of the Leadership Council approval provided that such an amendment shall be consistent with the applicable provisions of the Ohio Revised Code. Each amendment shall take effect on the date that it was passed by the Leadership Council and shall be made public to the Soma Members.

B. Any and all articles in this document are considered guidelines for the operation of the Soma Family of Ministries. The Leadership Council reserves the right, in accordance with the guidance of the Holy Spirit as witnessed by a majority of the Council Members, to set aside and even wave certain of these articles when necessary so long as such an action would not violate any provisions of the Ohio Revised Code.

**ARTICLE IX.
INDEMNIFICATION**

A. To the fullest extent not prohibited by applicable law, Soma shall indemnify each person, who, by reason of being or having been an officer, a Member of the Leadership Council and evidenced by a majority of Members, against any and all costs and expenses (including attorneys'

fees, judgments, fines, penalties, amount paid in settlement and other disbursements) actually and reasonably incurred by or imposed upon such a person in connection with any action, suit, investigation or proceeding (or claim or other matter herein), whether civil, criminal, administrative or otherwise in nature, including but not limited to any proceeding involving allegations of invasion of privacy, negligent or intentional infliction of emotional distress or any similar or related allegedly tortuous conduct, negligence, pastoral malpractice, breach of fiduciary duty or care or loyalty, or any suits alleging violations of civil rights including but not limited to discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, disability, handicap or sexual orientation, with respect to which person is named or otherwise threatened to be made a party by reason of being or any time having been an officer of Soma, a member of the Leadership Council, a member of the Soma Family of Ministries, a member of the Staff, or an Employee or other agent of or in a similar capacity with the Church by reason of being or at any time having been, at the direction or request of Soma, a director, elder, deacon, officer, trustee, administrator, manager, employee, member, advisor or other agent of or fiduciary for any other corporation, partnership, trust, venture or other entity or enterprise including any employee benefit plan.

B. Each request or case of or on behalf of any person who is or may be entitled to indemnification for reason other than in the paragraph above shall be reviewed by the Leadership Council, and the indemnification of such a person shall be authorized by a majority of the Leadership Council only if it is determined by the Leadership Council that indemnification is proper in the specific case, and, notwithstanding, anything to the contrary in this Constitution, no person shall indemnify to the extent, if any, it is determined by a majority of the Members of the Leadership Council or by written opinion of legal counsel designated by the Leadership Council for such a person that indemnification is contrary to applicable law.

C. Soma may, as determined by a majority of the Leadership Council direct, purchase and maintain such insurance on behalf of any person who is or at any time has been an officer of Soma, a member of the Leadership Council, a member of the Staff, or Employee or agent of or in similar capacity with Soma, or who is or at any time has been, at the direction or request of Soma, a director, trustee, officer, administrator, manager, employee, member, advisor or other agent of or fiduciary for any other corporation, partnership, trust, venture, or other entity or enterprise including any employee benefit plan against any liability asserted and incurred by such a person.

SECTION FOUR
STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following articles are a brief outline of the basic doctrinal beliefs of Soma.

ARTICLE I.
GOD

We believe in the one triune God revealed in the Bible; God, the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son; and the Holy Spirit. God is creator, redeemer, and the sovereign ruler of creation. He is the author of truth, love and faith.

ARTICLE II.
JESUS

We believe Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God - God who came in the flesh. He was in the beginning with God: yet, He was God. Apart from Him, nothing came in to being that has come in being. He is eternal with the Father undiminished in His deity and perfect in His humanity. We further believe that through His death, bodily resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father, man can be saved from his sinfulness. Jesus Christ will return to this earth in his full splendor and majesty for those who eagerly await Him. Furthermore, every knee will some day bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

ARTICLE III.
HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit also regenerates, sanctifies, and empowers the believer for ministry. He graces believers with Christ-like character and gifts His church for loving service.

ARTICLE IV.
BIBLE

We believe the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and believers standard for faith and practice.

ARTICLE V.
SIN

We believe man was created in the image of God. Mankind is separated from God through disobedience, and without God, he is without hope.

**ARTICLE VI.
SALVATION**

We believe the salvation of man is through renouncing his self-determination, taking responsibility for his disobedience, turning from his sin, and seeking forgiveness from God.

Further, we believe such a penitent person must put his faith in Jesus Christ, whom we believe the incarnate Son of God; Jesus died substitutionally for the transgressions of man, was raised from the dead on the third day, and ascended back to the Father in Heaven.

**ARTICLE VII.
PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER**

We believe in the priesthood of the believer, Jesus has become the High Priest of the believer, by the shedding of His blood, and has made it possible for each Christian to have free access to the presence of the Father. In His presence, each one can come to know the Father in confidence and faith.

**ARTICLE VIII.
CHURCH**

We believe the very nature and purpose of God is revealed in His church. Jesus came and established the church as His Body in the earth. We believe the Church Universal consists of all who live under the Lordship of Jesus, while the Church Local is a body of believing people, baptized and experiencing the love of Christ. Since the Church is one as God is one, the Church Local must seek to walk in harmony with the Church Universal.

**ARTICLE IX.
CHURCH'S ATMOSPHERE**

We believe the atmosphere of the church should be mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, and love. No other climate will allow the people of God to be free to grow. Furthermore, we believe that the church of God is a family that should foster care, mutual edification, and constant forgiveness without sacrificing righteousness as our base.

**ARTICLE X.
EVANGELISM**

We believe in world evangelism. We accept the commission of Jesus Christ, who is Lord, to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe His commandments. We join with all those believing in Him to accomplish this urgent task. We accept this as a personal commission as well as a commission of the entire Church.

**ARTICLE XII.
FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE**

We believe in freedom of conscience. One is responsible for his own choice and behavior. While God has ordained both civil and spiritual government, we believe each person is still directly accountable to Him. Therefore, pastors and churches can give spiritual guidance, but all service must be rendered voluntarily, joyfully, and from a free conscience.

**ARTICLE XIII.
TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

We believe the Church should be supported by the tithes and offerings of those committed to its mission (**Matthew 23:33**). We further believe that when people serve God with a free spirit, there is financial abundance to accomplish the purpose of God. We further believe that since the tithe belongs to the Lord, everyone should be led by the Holy Spirit in giving.

**ARTICLE XIV.
CIVIL AUTHORITY**

We believe God is the authority. He has ordained civil government in His Church to bring it to righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. We believe in mutual respect between civil and spiritual authority is separated from church government, it should not be separated from God and His law.

**ARTICLE XV.
CHRIST'S RETURN**

We believe Jesus Christ will return to earth in a viable way. His purposes will be to manifest His government in the earth. Christians are exhorted to watchfulness and obedience until His appearing. While there are many viewpoints concerning His second coming, we believe Christians should lovingly look for his appearing, giving full attention to obedience while he tarries. We believe His appearing will occasion the resurrection of the righteous who has died and who is now with Him.

**ARTICLE XVI.
JUDGEMENT**

We believe in a final judgment at the end of the age. The righteous and the wicked will stand before God and be judged. Those who have righteousness produced by faith will be awarded with the privilege of ruling and enjoying his eternal blessings. Those who are wicked will be eternally punished.

**ARTICLE XVII.
THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

In a day when extremes abound, the Church believes and values all of the gifts of God as found in **1 Corinthians 12-14**, **Romans 12: 1-8**, and **1 Peter 4:10-11**. Each gift should be operated in love, under Lordship, in faith, and under biblical and local authority. The gifts are a humble serving of one another by the Spirit. As God governs us in love, we will desire both the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22**; **1 Corinthians 14:1**).

SECTION FIVE THE VISION OF SOMA

The vision of Soma grows out of its purpose statement, which reads: **“Soma is a family of ministries offering encouragement, order and covering to its members by the operation of the five-fold ministry through a network of spiritual parents.”**

Soma vision is to establish a fellowship of closely connected Members and Ministries that share the common values necessary in making the called out community of believers a true family. This would include uniting any number of existing churches and ministries together under the Soma banner.

Soma has a vision of raising up spiritual fathers who are apostolically anointed for planting and overseeing new ministries and churches.

Soma’s worldwide vision is to see churches and ministries planted in the nations of the earth who can continue to send out native missionaries to further spread the gospel message.

Soma has a vision for establishing training centers and Bible colleges in strategic locations around the world. This, we believe, speaks to the heart of God for the five-fold ministry in “equipping the saints for the work of ministry.”

Soma looks to establish various retreat centers across the country, serving the ministry needs of the congregations involved in Soma. These places will also serve as places of rest and refreshing for those in the work of the Lord.

Soma’s vision also includes establishing places of permanent living for those men and women of God who have given their lives to the gospel and are now ready to enjoy the twilight years of their life.