

Section 5 - BLD COMMUNITY NORMS		
	<i>(Original CoC – Nov 2001)</i>	<i>(Proposed Revision of Community Norms – 2011)</i>
5.1	Introduction.	
	<p>The Ten Commandments are the minimum demands of the Christian moral code. But Christianity is more than a moral code; disciples of Christ are expected to live beyond the demands of the Ten Commandments. Christ invites us to live and love in a more radical way. We respond no longer by external compulsion of the Law, by the internal propulsion of Grace in the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.</p> <p>We are called to Righteousness by loving God above all as the expression of our spiritual worship. We are called to Servanthood by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves, and our brothers and sisters in Christ as God loves us.</p> <p>Sacrificial love is the new commandment of Christ. And because love has no limits whatever norms we adopt for ourselves today may change as we grow in wisdom and grace. The norms of the Community should thus be understood as dynamically progressive approximations of the Kingdom norms embodied in our highest ideal, Jesus Christ. As we live the gospel norms, therefore, we more closely approach our vision as a Community of Disciples.</p> <p>We therefore urge, encourage and support our members to observe the following behavioral patterns which, by our common agreement, characterize the spirituality we advocate as a Community.</p>	<p><u>As disciples of Christ Jesus, BLD Community members are expected to live beyond the demands of Christian Moral Code or of the Ten Commandments. Christ has invited us to live and to love like Him. As BLD Community members, we must respond not by external compulsion of Law but by the internal propulsion of grace from the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.</u></p> <p>We are called to Righteousness by loving God above all as the expression of our spiritual worship. We are called to Servanthood by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves and <u>loving</u> our brothers and sisters in Christ as God loves us.</p> <p>Sacrificial love is the new commandment of Christ. And because love has no limits, whatever norm we adopt for ourselves today may change as we grow in wisdom and grace. The norms of the BLD Community <u>thus should</u> be understood as dynamically progressive approximations of the <u>norms in God’s Kingdom</u>, as embodied in our highest ideal, Jesus Christ. As we live the <u>BLD Community norms</u>, therefore, we more closely approach our <u>BLD Community</u> Vision of a Community of Disciples.</p> <p>We urge, encourage, and support our <u>BLD Community</u> members to observe the following behavioral patterns, which by our common agreement characterize the spirituality we advocate as a Community.</p>
5.2	On Well-Being	
5.2.1	<p>Avoid or overcome addictions to nicotine, alcohol and other drugs, or to over indulgent behavior as in compulsive gambling (electronic and computer games), workaholism, overeating, impulsive buying, etc. through prayers, shepherding, counseling, mutual support groups, teaching, and orderly study of the Word.</p>	<p><u>Balance thoughts, actions, and feelings to prevent desires from ruling lives, enjoying all good things in moderation, and practicing self-control (Temperance is the cardinal virtue). Through prayers, reception of the Sacraments, fasting, shepherding, counseling, mutual support groups, teaching, and orderly study of the Word, overcome all kinds of addiction</u></p>

Attachment A

5.2.2	Keep physically and mentally fit by exercising daily, taking the proper rest and sleep, eating balanced and healthful meals, taking up an enjoyable sports activity.	Keep physically and mentally fit by exercising daily, taking the proper rest and sleep, eating balanced and healthful meals, taking up an enjoyable sports activity. <u>Enjoy a balance of activities: vent energies and find refreshment through exercise, play and hobbies</u>
5.2.3	Avoid serving intoxicating drinks, hard liquor or similar liquids at public gatherings under the auspices of the Community, including Encounter class reunions, fellowships, sports or thanksgiving events or similar functions and assemblies. (The Community does not regard the taking of wine as inherently wrong. It recognizes that the fruit of the vine is a substance that is transformed into the Blood of the Lord at the Eucharist. Moreover, it believes that drinking of wine is to be regarded by Disciples as a private activity with prudent moderation and self-control.)	Avoid serving intoxicating drinks, hard liquor or similar liquids at public gatherings under the auspices of the Community, including Encounter class reunions, fellowships, sports or thanksgiving events or similar functions and assemblies. The Community does not regard the taking of wine as inherently wrong <u>when done in moderation as a private activity. It acknowledges that as early as 10 BC, moderation, rather than total abstinence was stressed. In the New Testament, Jesus’ first miracle involved wine, the wedding at Cana, indicating that Jesus accepted the prudent use of wine and appreciated its role in celebration. Likewise wine was central in Jesus’ last meeting with his apostles. ”This cup is the new covenant in my blood...drink it in remembrance of me.” Moderation is defined locally by what is allowed by Civil Law.</u>
5.2.4	Avoid coming to Community gatherings, e.g. worship services, WSCs/LWGs and District Assemblies and other events/functions mentioned in 5.2.c., reeking with or smelling of alcohol.	Avoid coming to Community gatherings, e.g. worship services, WSCs/LWGs and District Assemblies and other events/functions mentioned in 5.2.3, reeking with or smelling of alcohol. <u>Have respect for the activity and be a living witness to participating members</u>
5.3	On Finances	
5.3.1	Fulfill financial obligations fully and promptly.	Fulfill financial obligations fully and promptly. <u>Spend within your means and strive to live in moderation</u>
5.3.2	Be free from imprudent borrowings; but in those instances where they fail, the Community will assist them in avoiding unnecessary debts through Pastoral Care like counseling or shepherding.	Be free from imprudent borrowings. Under unavoidable circumstances, <u>BLD Community will assist members in debt management</u> through pastoral care like counselling or shepherding. (In North America, borrowing from legitimate financial institution is a better option than personal borrowing from individuals). <u>Strive to be free from debts and imprudent borrowings from anyone.</u>
5.3.3	Invest only in legitimate, productive and humane enterprises which conform to and advance the Gospel.	Invest only in legitimate, productive and humane enterprises, which conform to <u>the belief of the Roman Catholic faith.</u>
5.4	On Giving	

Attachment A

5.4.1	Give financial aid to those members who have real financial needs (as ascertained by the Community), especially those who are terminally ill and are without adequate resources, by living in faith according to their means rather than lending.	Give financial aid to those members who have real financial needs (as ascertained by the Community), especially those who are terminally ill and are without adequate resources, by living in faith according to their means rather than lending.
5.4.2	Give 3-1/3% of the personal income to the Community, 3-1/3% to the parish, and 3-1/3% for the worship celebrations of the family, as tithe. (Deuteronomy 14: 22-29)	Give 3-1/3% of the personal income to the Community, 3-1/3% to the parish, and 3-1/3% for the worship celebrations of the family, as tithe. (Deuteronomy 14: 22-29)
5.5	On Speech	
5.5.1	Speak well of others.	Speak well of others <u>to up-build and edify the Body of Christ</u>
5.5.2	Speak only the truth to others, with prudence and respect.	Speak only the truth to others with prudence and respect, <u>always mindful that we will be judged in every word that comes out from our mouth. (Matt 12:22)</u>
5.5.3	Reject idle talk and gossip, and admonish those who engage in them	Reject idle talk and gossip <u>that sows discord</u> . Admonish those who engage in them <u>because failure to correct them in love makes us equally guilty of the sin of omission.</u>
5.6	On Piety	
5.6.1	Pray at least one hour a day.	<u>Dedicate at least an hour a day to prayer and reflection.</u>
5.6.2	Celebrate and receive the Eucharist at least twice a week	Celebrate and receive the Eucharist at least twice a week
5.6.3	Prayerfully read and meditate on the mass reading of the day.	Prayerfully read and meditate on the mass reading of the day.
5.6.4	Have a personal Bible easily accessible at all times.	Have a personal Bible easily accessible at all times.
5.6.5	Read and systematically study at 2 chapters of the Bible a day	Read and <u>reflect at least one chapter of the Bible a day.</u>
5.6.6	Memorize at least one Bible verse a week.	Memorize <u>and live out</u> at least one Bible verse a week.
5.6.7	Skip one full meal a week (or the equivalent mortification), with the savings given to the Breaking the Yoke of Poverty Program	Skip one full meal a week (or any equivalent activity of value) as a sacrifice and <u>give the savings to the global programs in the BLD Missions.</u>
5.6.8	Strive to have a working knowledge of the social teachings of the Church.	Strive to have a <u>good knowledge and understanding</u> of the <u>Church's social teachings</u>
5.6.9	Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly.	Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation <u>immediately when not in a state of grace or at least once every quarter.</u>
5.6.10	Submit to pastoral authority and care.	Submit to pastoral authority and care
5.6.11	Be faithful in attending Prayer Meetings, Living Word Circles, Word Sharing Circles, Community Assemblies, Retreats and Recollections.	Be faithful in attending Prayer Meetings, Living Word Circles, Word Sharing Circles, Community Assemblies, Retreats and Recollections.

Attachment A

5.7	On Availability	
5.7.1	Be present in all Community activities and arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled starting time, to allow fellowship with others.	Be present in all BLD Community activities, arriving early to give time for fellowship and building relationship with others
5.7.2	Be always ready to serve in whatever capacity the Community is calling us.	Be always ready to serve in whatever capacity <u>to which we are called upon by the BLD Community.</u>
5.7.3	Actively participate in Community activities, particularly in those areas where are especially equipped or have the required charism.	Actively participate in <u>BLD</u> Community activities, particularly in those areas <u>in which</u> we are especially equipped or have the charism.
5.7.4	Be diligent, orderly and productive in the performance of our work.	Be diligent, orderly and productive <u>in the service that we render.</u>
5.7.5	Develop our gifts and talents and discipline ourselves so that we can competently exercise these gifts and talents to upbuild the Community.	<u>Discipline ourselves and develop our gifts and talents</u> so that we can competently exercise these gifts and talents to up-build the <u>BLD</u> Community.
5.7.6	Maximize the utilization of our God-given resources so that we will be self-sufficient in our needs and be able to share with others.	Maximize the utilization of our God-given resources so that we will be self-sufficient in our needs and be able to share with others.
5.8	On Working Together	
5.8.1	Invite and enable others to share or contribute to the effective completion of the work.	Invite and enable others to share or contribute to the effective completion of assigned tasks.
5.8.2	Regard conflict as opportunities for mutual understanding rather than division, and therefore pursue initiatives and actively work towards the resolution of conflicts so that facts are clarified, issues resolved, and persons reconciled.	Regard conflicts as opportunities for mutual understanding rather than <u>causes for</u> division and pursue initiatives <u>that work towards</u> the resolution of conflicts <u>and issues, clarification of</u> facts, <u>and reconciliation of parties involved</u>
5.8.3	Dialogue in peace with each other and pursue initiatives to exchange, share, discover, and discern together as an alternative to hostile argumentation and debate (equanimity).	Dialogue in peace with one another and pursue initiatives to exchange, share, discover and <u>together discern</u> an alternative to hostile argumentation and debate.
		<u>Support by words and action the spirit of unity and harmony among members as contained in the Prayer for the Community, to banish all bitterness, petty bickering and strife from our midst.</u>
5.9	On Decision-Making	
5.9.1	Seek relevant information, clarify facts and understand perceptions before making judgements or taking action.	Seek relevant <u>and valid</u> information, clarify facts and understand perceptions before making judgements or taking action

Attachment A

5.9.2	Express true opinions, views and sentiments on Community matters, and allow others to express their own.	Express true opinions, views and sentiments on Community matters, and allow others to express their own.
5.9.3	Seek the counsel and opinion from others in the Community who will be directly or indirectly affected by decisions and actions.	Seek the counsel and opinion from others in the Community who will be directly or indirectly affected by decisions and actions
5.9.4	Accept responsibility and accountability for our decisions and actions.	Accept responsibility and accountability for our decisions and actions. <u>Ensure that persons who will be affected by a decision must be the first ones to know.</u>
5.9.5	Study and seek understanding of issues regarding major Community decisions	Study and seek understanding of issues regarding major Community decisions.
5.10	On Caring	
5.10.1	Attend first to the needs of others	Attend first to the needs of others
5.10.2	Greet each other with a smile	Greet each other with a smile.
5.10.3	Make others feel welcome at Community functions	Make others feel welcome at Community functions
5.10.4	Mutually support and encourage each other to live the norms.	Mutually support and encourage one another to live the BLD Community norms.
5.10.5	Give and receive forgiveness freely.	Give and receive forgiveness freely
5.10.6	When able, help those in need. When in need, humbly seek help; and when help is given, humbly receive.	When able, help those in need .When in need, humbly seek help, and <u>humbly receive when help is given.</u>
5.11	On Fraternal Correction	
5.11.1	Speak privately to the brother or sister witnessed as committing a wrongdoing for clarification, and if necessary, for correction and counsel. After all efforts to speak in private with the wrongdoer have failed, speak about what we witnessed only with the one who has direct pastoral responsibility over the perceived wrongdoer.	<u>Observe and practice the process of fraternal correction as follows: If your brother sins, go directly to the person; discuss and reprove him in private. Resort only to a higher authority when correction process is proven ineffective.</u>
5.11.2	Be open to receive fraternal correction with wisdom and in peace	<u>When reprovved, be able to receive re-proof humbly, with an open heart, and ask God for proof of sin in prayer.</u>
5.12	On Married Life	
	Coupleness is a Community charism that must be preserved and fostered. We require our Disciples, and encourage and support our members who are in the married state, to be in the grace of sacramental marriage in the Catholic Church.	Coupleness is a Community charism that must be preserved and fostered. We require our Disciples, and encourage and support our members who are in the married state, to be in the grace of sacramental marriage in the Catholic Church.
5.12.1	Have daily conjugal dialogue and prayer.	Have daily conjugal dialogue and prayer.

Attachment A

5.12.2	Acknowledge husbands as head of the family, responsible and accountable primarily for the spiritual, and secondarily, for the material needs of the family.	Acknowledge husbands as head of the family, responsible and accountable primarily for the spiritual, and secondarily, for the material needs of the family.
5.12.3	Consult each other and together discern the will of God in all major decisions. In case of an impasse, the husband must accept the responsibility for, and face the consequences of the final decision	Consult each other and together discern the will of God in all major decisions. In case of an impasse, the husband must accept the responsibility for, and face the consequences of the final decision.
5.12.4	Give visible witness to their loving relationship	Give visible witness to their loving relationship.
5.12.5	Practice and advocate only those family planning methods adhered to by the Catholic Church.	Practice and advocate only those family planning methods adhered to by the Catholic Church.
5.12.6	Serve together as couples in the Community in a complementary way	Serve together as couples in the Community in a complementary way.
5.12.7		<u>Train your children the Christian way as the foundation for their lives. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)</u>
5.13	On Personal Issues and Confidentiality	
5.13.1		<u>"In confidence" means that the truth is being shared and confided and such truth is not to be used maliciously and falsely to gain favour from another person.</u>
5.13.2		<u>Members or leaders going on leave or are on leave may state "for personal reasons" and such reason/s must be respected unconditionally by all concerned and more importantly by those who are not directly concerned. Quantify the reason, it may need pastoral help</u>
5.14	On Forgiveness	
5.14.1		<u>Forgive those who have hurt you in the eyes and presence of God even if the person does not ask for forgiveness.</u>
5.14.2		<u>Pray for and bless the people that hurt and oppress you, so that the love of the Father may be restored in them fully.</u>
5.14.3		<u>Forgive from the heart unconditionally and infinitely.</u>