

Regarding the Faith Community and Mission of the South Side Mission of Peoria and its Entities

1. Key Characteristics of the South Side Mission's Faith Community and Mission

The South Side Mission (here to referred to as SSM) is a community of faith that exists to exercise its biblical beliefs through its multiple ministry sites. The beliefs are grounded in a shared understanding of the Holy Scriptures including those beliefs expressed in our statement of faith, by laws and other organizational operating documents.

A. South Side Mission's Biblical Beliefs

The SSM is a community of faith based on its biblical beliefs which include the following:

1. Statement of Faith. The SSM has adopted a statement of faith set forth in the personnel manual and by-laws.
2. Christian Mission and values, The SSM directs all its activities in accordance with the following mission:

South Side Mission exists to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to the poor, and in His name to love, feed, house, clothe and teach all those people He sends to us.

To accomplish this we seek to bring individuals to repentance and obedience to the call of Jesus Christ upon their lives. This call to obedience is central to all of the programs and services that we offer to "all those people He (Christ) sends to us." Our desire is to train those Christ sends to us to be mobilized to reach out and win others to faith in Christ.

In carrying out this mission, the SSM activities are conducted in accordance with the following biblical values:

Lost people matter to God. He wants them found by the message of salvation. Luke 19:10

Prayer is the primary work of the people of God. Philippians 4:6, 7

Everything we have belongs to God. We are his stewards. I Chronicles 29:14

Knowing and obeying God's Word is fundamental to all true success. Joshua 1:8

Completing the Great Commission will require the mobilization of every fully devoted disciple. Matthew 28:19.

Without the empowering of the Holy Spirit, we can accomplish nothing. I Cor. 2:4, 5

Achieving God's purposes means taking faith-filled risks. Heb. 11:6

B. Representatives and Other Participants

The SSM's faith community is represented by all of the board members, staff and volunteer leaders and is an integral part of the SSM's mission and community (each such person is described for purposes of this Statement as a "SSM representative." The other community participants and volunteers contribute to the faith community, but they do not represent SSM unless they are also employees or leaders and have been designated as such by SSM leadership authority.

C. Christian Exercise and Expression

1. *As a Community.* SSM was incorporated as a church and SSM believes that the local church is the visible expression of the Body of Christ and that this organization finds broader meaning in fulfilling its biblical responsibilities to the faith community and non-believing community it serves. In addition, those who participate in the mission of the SSM, including SSM representatives, are following the biblical command to live out their faith in community and in association with other believers, This activity is itself an exercise of and expression of its biblical beliefs and standards.
2. *Through its mission based activities.* All SSM activities, including the responsibilities of every SSM participant and SSM representative, should be rendered to God as a form of worship. Therefore, SSM community of faith exercises and expresses its biblical beliefs in every activity.

II. Christian Community Standards for Ministry Activities

A. General Standards

The SSM shall engage in activities and use its facilities solely to exercise and express the biblical beliefs of the SSM and to further its mission. No SSM activity, nor use of SSM facilities by another group or person, may be conducted or permitted if the SSM determines that such activity or use expresses a message of support by SSM for any view contrary to the biblical beliefs of SSM.

B. Specific Concerns

For many years the SSM as a faith community has had concerns with the cultural and legal trends in America. This has resulted in the following specific statements being adopted.

Marriage and Human Sexuality

The SSM subscribes to the biblical belief that God has created each individual in his image to bring glory and honor to him. There are two distinct genders, male and female, and the gender that God intended for us was determined by such individual's gender at birth. The SSM applies this belief in gender identity in all of its policies and programs. In addition the SSM subscribes to the biblical belief that God has instituted marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman. The SSM applies this belief in one man one woman marriage in all of its policies and programs. Furthermore the SSM upholds the belief that sexual desire is rightly fulfilled only inside this covenant marriage relationship. Unmarried singles can abstain from sex and be whole, mature persons, and as pleasing to God as the married person.

Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all life is sacred in the eyes of God because all human life bears the image of God and all created life bears the unique design of a Divine creator. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...’”(Gen. 1:27). All life even before conception has been planned in the heart and mind of God. “I will praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made, your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place... All the days ordained for me were written in your book **before** one of them came to be” (Psalm 139: 14-16). Translation, God knew of us, planned for our coming, before we were even conceived. So we believe that all life should be protected and valued, not aborted.

Religious Activities

In conformance with these biblical beliefs and standards, SSM engages solely in activities that further its faith mission. All such activities should be vehicles for spiritual growth; therefore, SSM considers all of its activities to be a form of religious worship.

SSM distinguishes between exclusive religious activities and integrated religious activities. Exclusive religious activities include devotional worship services such as chapel services. Integrated religious activities include activities similar to those conducted by nonreligious groups for the benefit of society. SSM conducts such activities in furtherance of and in accordance with its biblical beliefs.

With respect to restrictions that may be imposed on the use of funds or other benefits offered to SSM, SSM shall not agree to any restrictions that would preclude SSM conducting its integrated activities in accordance with its religious beliefs. SSM may agree to not use offered funds or benefits for exclusive religious activities.

C. Implementation

To the extent that the Board of Directors of SSM determines it to be necessary or advisable to further SSM mission or to cultivate SSM faith community, they may establish additional standards based on Holy Scriptures and the beliefs and standards addressed in Statement of Faith, by-laws and personnel manual for the activities and programs conducted within the faith community or for SSM representatives or participants. The determination as to whether any particular activity or use of SSM facilities is not permitted under this Policy requires both spiritual discernment and an understanding of SSM beliefs and standards which are applied to each particular circumstance. Such determination shall be made in conformance with this discernment and these beliefs and standards is the sole discretion of the spiritual leaders of SSM designated by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority. With respect to uses by other groups or persons, SSM may consider with limitation both the content of the proposed activities and whether the group or person is generally perceived by the public as advocating views contrary to the biblical beliefs of SSM.

III. Community Standards for SSM representatives

A. Rules and Expectations

In response to God's calling on their lives, SSM representatives exercise and express both their own and the SSM biblical beliefs and standards by working together to advance SSM's faith mission. SSM representatives are responsible for defining, cultivating, leading and/or representing SSM faith community as an expression and exercise of their and SSM's biblical beliefs and standards. Accordingly each SSM representative shall be expected to (i) model these biblical beliefs for others (ii) perform all their responsibilities as a service for God and (iii) comply with the following obligations:

1. *Biblical Beliefs.* Each SSM representative shall affirm their agreement with SSM statement of faith and other biblical beliefs and shall not subscribe to or promote any religious beliefs inconsistent with these beliefs.
2. *Christian Conduct Standards.* SSM representatives shall at all times (working and non-working hours) endeavor to conduct themselves in a manner that affirms biblical standards of conduct in accordance with theirs and SSM biblical beliefs.
3. *Distinctly Christian Activities.* Each SSM representative shall be ready, willing and able to lead or contribute to distinctly Christian activities such as worship or prayer services.

B. Noncompliance by Representatives

If any SSM representative does not comply with the obligations detailed above, such representative shall have the obligation to disclose such noncompliance. SSM will then determine if the representative is likely to or intends to continue in noncompliance. If so, then SSM may dismiss such representative from his or her position because their noncompliance is inconsistent with and undermines the expression and exercise of SSM faith community.

C. Volunteers and Contract Workers

Volunteers and Contract workers are not considered representatives of SSM faith community unless they are serving in leadership positions. Nevertheless, when volunteers or contract workers serve with SSM they shall acknowledge that they understand and agree to support SSM mission and values. SSM may give preference for such service to volunteers and contract workers who share its biblical beliefs.

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