**The Handbook of Christian Life in Scandinavia Chinese Christian Church** (20081024 Edition)

***Background:***

The pastors and evangelists at Scandinavia Chinese Christian Church (SCCC) held an informal meeting in the Summer Camp on July 22, 2005. The motive of the meeting is to respond to requests of some layman leaders. They required a clear church standpoint of view on homosexuality, divorce and remarriage. On the other side the ministers are looking for a clarified church creed to introduce to new co-workers. After the meeting in the Summer Camp the pastors decided to gather again at SCCC Board Meeting on Oct.14, 2005. The idea of a handbook for all SCCC members came up among the meetings to address the issues mentioned above.

***Review***

On Oct.14,2005 SCCC Board agreed on the contents of the handbook as following: The principle of the teaching and application of Spiritual gifts in church; the position and ministry possibilities of sisters in church; the standpoint of view on homosexual partnership/marriage; the standpoint of view on divorce and remarriage among Christians; the standpoint of view on Anabaptism and infant baptism; the guideline on Christian moral in family and in society; the standpoint of view on Catholic Church; the moral requirements on pastors, elders and deacons.

On March 25, 2006 SCCC Board suggested to discuss the view on “female pastor” at the co-worker retreat meeting in May, 2006.

On Oct.20, 2006 the pastors and evangelists agreed on the contents of the handbook as following: the principle of the teaching and application of Spiritual gifts in church; the position and ministry possibilities of sisters in church; the standpoint of view on homosexual partnership/marriage; the standpoint of view on divorce and remarriage among Christians; the standpoint of view on Anabaptism and infant baptism; the moral requirements on pastors, elders and deacons.

On March 24, 2007 SCCC Board suggested to change the name of the handbook to “The Guideline on Christian Life in SCCC”

On Oct.19, 2007 SCCC Board edited the contents of The Guideline on Christian Life in SCCC. In the end SCCC Board renamed it to “The Handbook of Christian Life in SCCC” (The Handbook).

On March.29, 2008 SCCC Board accepted the contents and wording of the handbook. Following the rules on SCCC Constitution, the handbook was then given out to all SCCC Member Congregation for discussion and approval.

On Oct.24, 2008 SCCC Board accepted the suggestion from SCCC Oslo that put the issue of sister ministry possibilities together with the issue of female pastor to SCCC Constitution.

Year 2009, the handbook came to its present form after a three year long discussion in different occasions.

***SCCC Views on Christian Life***

**The Application of Spiritual Gifts**

 **Position:**

 In SCCC Christians are allowed to speak tongues in order during the worship if there is another Christian on place interpreting the tongues to human language.

 If there is no such interpreter available in the worship SCCC encourage the Christians with tongue speaking gift to pray silently or exercise this spiritual gift at home worship.

 If any Christian layman, pastor, priest, evangelist or speaker outside SCCC desires to exercise his/her super natural spiritual gifts such as prophesy, healing or exorcism in the worship held in SCCC Congregation, he/she must inform the congregational pastor of SCCC in advance and get the permission to do it first.

 **Biblical Basis:**

We believe that all baptized in the name of Jesus Christ shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians and that He is the Comforter of Christians. (John 14:16-17)

We encourage Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

We do not believe that speaking tongue is the evidence of fullness of the Holy Spirit. We consider it one of the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. We believe that the evidence of fullness of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16-25)

We believe that those filled by the Holy Spirit would be witness to Jesus Christ full of power, faith, courage and joy. (Act 1:8, 4:31)

We believe that the Holy Spirit manifest Himself in miracles and wonder through His people today as yesterday. (Act 2:43, 5:12, 6:8)

We do not believe that the power of the Holy Spirit could only be revealed through miracles and wonders. We believe that the work and the power of the Holy Spirit could also be manifested in a Christian life acknowledged, changed by His Words. (John 14:26, 16:8, 13-14)

We believe that the Holy Spirit divides diversities of gifts to Christians as He will. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-28, Romans 12:5-8, 1 Peter 4:10-11).

If there is no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church. (1 Corinthians 14:27-28, 33, 39-40)

We encourage Christians to desire spiritual gift in order to excel to the edifying of the church. (1 Corinthian 14:1-5, 12-19)

**Divorce and Remarriage among Christians**

Position:

Divorce: Divorce covers three situations: The husband divorced his wife; the wife divorced her husband or a divorce upon mutual understanding of the husband and the wife. Divorce among Christians could be accepted under two conditions:

One part has committed fornication. (Matt. 19:9)

The unbelieving part insisted on departing. (1 Cor.7:15)

 Despite the two allowed conditions divorce is considered as a passive permission, not an absolute solution. (Matt.19:8-9)

 2. Remarriage: Christians are allowed to remarry under three conditions.

 2.1. If one part is dead, the other part is at liberty to get remarried. (1 Cor.7:39)

 2.2. If one part is fornicated and ended in divorcement, the non-guilty part may get remarried. (Deut.24:1-4) On the other side, whoever marrying a divorced, fornicated part commits adultery. (Matt.5:32)

 2.3. If the unbelieving part caused divorce and refused to take it back the believing part has the possibility to get remarried. (1 Cor.7:15) However, divorcement itself is not a plausible reason for remarriage.

Bible has required the divorced to get remarried. What says in the Bible is that remarriage is allowed under certain circumstances. Those, who considering remarriage, should be extraordinarily careful. They are obliged to learn lessons from the failure of their last marriage. Furthermore they are urged to seek help from the church so that not to make the same mistake in marriage. The remarried new believer needs not to leave the remarried part in order the remedy last marriage. Once get divorce the covenant of marriage has been broken. God has forgiven the sin of this breakage. The remarried part should be faithful to his/her new partner. (Deut.24:3-4)

We believe that divorce and remarriage is not the will of God according to the Bible. Therefore we urge our brothers and sister in Lord to respect the Holiness of our marriage, to be fervent, patient to our partner, and to do our best to keep our marriage. Meanwhile, the church is acknowledged of the weakness and foolishness of human being. Influenced by the society and culture Christians may get divorced or remarried passively or actively. On one side the church recognize divorce a sin, on the other the church consider it a sin forgivable by God. To meet the both ends the church is willing to accept all repent, new born brothers and sisters in Christ. For those repent by heart and in behavior they are equally treated in the church. Accordingly they are equally entitled to ministry fitting their spiritual status and gifts.

**Biblical Basis:**

Old Testament:

God created marriage is for the husband and the wife to live as companion all their life in the covenant witnessed by our Lord. The husband shall love the wife of his youth. (Deut.2:14-15)

God hates putting away. (Deut.2:16)

Considered from the relationship between God and Israel God judge upon Israel but He is pacified to them and will establish His covenant with them. (Ezekiel 16:60-63). Making it a parallel to the relationship between the husband and the wife, the goal of the marriage should be pacified to each other and establish the covenant despite all difficulties between the couple.

New Testament:

Moses allowed Israel to put away their wives because of the hardness of their hearts. Upon Israel’s failing to follow the will of God Moses commanded as such for regulation of wrongs, so that no greater suffering arose. (Matt.3-9)

Marriage is a lifelong covenant. Moses allowed to give a writing of divorcement but from the beginning it was not so. The marriage created by God is for that they two shall be one flesh. (Matt. 19:8)

The Lord says God has joined together, let not man put asunder. When the two get joined before God in oath the two fleshes considered put together by God. Either part of them has no right to put it asunder. (Matt.19:4-6)

Divorce is not the will of God. The Bible urges that let not the wife depart from her husband and let him not put her away even in the case that one of the parts is unbeliever. (1 Cor.7:10-13)

When it comes to remarriage the Bible says that she is happier if she so abide. (1 Cor.7:40)

If the divorced part has changed his/her life after believing in God and is willing to reconcile to his wife/her husband the reconciliation of the marriage is a glory to God though adequate consultation is remanded for remarriage of such character. (1 Cor.7:11)

**Homosexuality**

Position:

Definition: From a broad perspective homosexuality is the sexual attraction between two people of the same gender, including: sexual desire, sexual imagination, and sexual behavior on another person of the same gender. This description shall not be applied on children, teenage, prisoner and people of extraordinary curiosity.

 The position in the Bible is clear on this, which should also be the position of the church. God hates homosexuality just as He hates all other sins. If a person has sexual desire, lust, interest, imagination on another of the same gender he/she commits adultery. Jesus reminds us of this in the sermon on the mountain. (Matt.5:27-30).

All sexual relationship out the marriage between a man and a woman is cursed in the Bible. (Gen.2:18-25, Matt.19:3-10, Mark 10:6-10). Homosexuality is one of the cursed sexual relationships as such.

The Bible proclaims to the world that God will forgive sins of the world in Jesus Christ and bring people hope if the ungodly confess their sins. (Romans 5:6-11, 1 John 1:9). God is willing to save homosexuals or people with homosexual inclination from the temptation of their homosexual lust. (1 Cor.10:15)

**Biblical Basis:**

Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.19:1-11) together with Gibeah (Judges 19:22-26) are two narratives about homosexuality.

In the New Testament Jesus criticized the people in the two cities related to homosexuality for non- receiving, impenitent, fake behaviors. (Matt.10:2-15, 11:20-24, Luke 10:8-12). The citizens tried to do so wickedly (Gen.19:7) and folly (Judges 19:23) to the visitors. In other words they tried to rape the guests. The key words are “So that we may know them.” To know, yada in Hebrew, means intercourse. To put it another way the citizen in Sodom, Gomorrah and Gibeah to do this wicked thing on their guests. Thus says Jude 7 that Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, give themselves over to fornication, and go after strange flesh.

The Bible clearly says no to homosexuality. Moses Law is a religious law as well as a moral law. Furthermore, the character of a religious law makes it a more applicable moral ditto. (Lev.18:22, 20:13).

Apostle Paul clearly says no to homosexuality. He points out that homosexuality is the fruit of unrighteousness. Professing themselves to be wise the ungodly become fools. Homosexuality is the witness of their uncleanness. (Romans 1:24-28).

Apostle Paul mentioned homosexual offenders (perverts), “arsenokoitai”, will not be able to inherit the kingdom of God in two of his letters, 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. We can make a parallel of the teachings in 1 Cor.1:9-10 to the Ten Commandments. ( 1 Cor.6:9-11, 1 Tim.1:9-10)

**Moral Requirements on Pastors, Elders/Deacons**

 **Position:**

As he which has called you is holy, so you shall be holy in all manner of conversation.

 (1 Peter.1:15)

 In light of this Biblical teaching the church requires pastors/elders/deacons to be holy in all manners.

**Biblical Basis:**

Marital Life:

Faithful to one man-one woman marriage: the husband of one wife. (1 Tim.3:2).

Abstained from fornication. (1 Thess.4:3)

Social Life:

Non-slanders (1 Tim.3:11)

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting (Eph.5:4)

Not in rioting and drunkenness (Romans 13:13)

Given to hospitality, not greedy of filthy lucre (1 Tim.3:3,8)

Take no brides (1 Sam.8:3), Be pure (2 Cor.6:6)

Must not strive (2 Cor.2:24)

Do justly, love mercy, be righteous (Micah 6:8)