

## A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR



# Church Cemeteries

GEORGIA BAPTIST FOUNDATION, INC.

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[www.gbfoundation.org](http://www.gbfoundation.org)



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## Why this book?

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven...” Ecclesiastes 3:1*

I cannot speak for other evangelical groups much less other Baptist groups, however, I do feel that I have earned the right to make sanctified observations about cooperating Georgia Baptists and my guess is that all churches, regardless of denomination, struggle with the same basic issues concerning their cemeteries.

“With my own eyes” Let me briefly state why I have invested time and resources on this book. The Georgia Baptist Convention is composed of over 3400 local churches scattered all over the state literally from the mountains to the sea. These churches represent congregations of like faith and order, that voluntarily work together to fulfill Christ’s’ commission. Most of these churches are rural congregations and most of them have cemeteries. Let’s be conservative and say that only one-half of these churches have a cemetery, that’s over 1700 cemeteries in one group of Baptists in one evangelical group in one state. Its kind of mind boggling to think about how many church cemeteries there are in the southeastern U.S.A. isn’t it? Wow, I wonder how many there are in the entire nation?

First, my confidence in these statements is based upon the fact that for the past fourteen years I have driven approximately 500,000 miles visiting and speaking in hundreds of Georgia Baptist churches on behalf of the Georgia Baptist Foundation, Inc. I have seen, with my own eyes, literally hundreds of church cemeteries.

“The Graying of America” Next, it is common knowledge that America is getting older. A U.S. News and World Report article, based upon U.S. Census Bureau data, states that the projected number of Americans over 65 years old in the year 2000 is approximately 35 million and this number will gradually increase to 80 million over the next 50 years. This “graying of America” will naturally generate more funerals and a greater use of church cemeteries

“Lack of Resources” Finally, the primary reason for this book is that, to my knowledge, there is not a practical book like this available to the church community. I will gladly retract the above when provided such a resource. Immediately prior to drafting this

preface I called and checked with the largest Christian bookstore in Atlanta and their Nation-wide database showed no practical comprehensive help for church cemeteries. In a nutshell, this is why I am compiling this book.

My prayer is that the Lord will use this book to help churches in fulfilling their sacred duty.

## A Sacred Duty

*“If only you would hide me in the grave...and then remember me.”*  
*Job 14:13*

**T**he Biblical record supports the notion of a proper burial. The burials of many important Biblical figures are recorded, including: Abraham, Sarah, Rachel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Joshua, Moses, Samuel, and David, John the Baptist, Stephen and Jesus. The apostle Paul uses the burial imagery of planting a seed and new life rising as he gives hope to the believers in Corinth. (1Cor. 15:35-44) The scriptures also indicate that not to be given a proper burial was considered to be dishonorable. (See Jeremiah 16:6, 22:19 and 1 Kings 13:22.) Therefore, it seems that if we use our sanctified reason, we will conclude that if burial is proper, honorable and sacred, then maintaining the burial site is proper, honorable and sacred as well.

“The importance of Memorials” I cannot give you chapter and verse to support maintaining a cemetery but the scriptures have much to say about the importance of “memorials”. Do a little study for yourself and you’ll quickly see the importance of “remembering”. Ref. Joshua 4:6-8, Isaiah 56:4-6, Malachi 3:16, Exodus 32:13, Job 14:3, 24:20.

The bottom line is that the Bible, common sense, common decency and respect for our fellow man leads us to conclude that it is a “sacred duty” to respect and maintain the burial place of those that have gone before.

Here are verbatim sections of Georgia State law.

37-72-1 G

“State  
Law \*\*\* CODE SECTION \*\*\* 10/15/99  
agrees...”

36-72-1.

- (a) The care accorded the remains of deceased persons reflects respect and regard for human dignity as well as cultural, spiritual, and religious values. The General Assembly declares that human remains and burial objects are not property to be owned by the person or entity which owns the land or water where the human remains and burial objects are interred or discovered, but human remains and burial objects are a part of the finite, irreplaceable, and nonrenewable cultural heritage of the people of Georgia which should be protected.

36-72-2.

As used in this chapter, the term:

- (9) “Preserve and protect” means to keep safe from destruction, peril, or other adversity and may include the placement of signs, markers, fencing, or other such appropriate features so as to identify the site as a cemetery or burial ground and may also include the cleaning, maintenance, and upkeep of the site so as to aid in its preservation and protection.

## **In “Conclusion”**

Both the Scripture and the law supports the importance of honoring our dead as a “Sacred Duty”.

## The Church Cemetery And The Law

*“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers...the powers that be are ordained of God.” Rm. 13:1*

It is important for the church to understand the concept of “related use”. Typically, a non-profit organization such as a church is exempt from compliance with state and local laws regulating cemeteries because the church cemetery is a “related use” of the church. In evangelical lingo we would say “Related use” that the cemetery is a “ministry” of the church; hence, the cemetery is directly related to the church.

Listen up! It is generally interpreted that the church cemetery is exempt from compliance, however a church, as a non-profit organization, must not sell cemetery lots to individuals for using the cemetery. This could be interpreted as the church being in the cemetery business rather than a non-profit ministry and legally there is a big difference.

“Fees or Donations” My suggestion is do not use the terms “sell” in any of your cemetery related documentation. It is very appropriate however, to require a donation or cemetery maintenance fee for the use of the cemetery.

Example:

Recommended Donation

1 grave lot	\$ 300
2 grave lots	\$ 500
4 grave lots	\$ 800
8 grave lots	\$1200

## Note

Let me encourage your church to use the above figures as minimum donation amounts. These are very reasonable rates compared to a secular perpetual care cemetery. These donations should be placed in your churches cemetery maintenance trust fund for the maintenance of the cemetery. I'll have more to say about his later on.

“Deeds or Burial Rights” Typically churches issue a document granting burial rights in the church cemetery and not a deed to the burial lots. Examples of these are in the next chapter of this book.

## State Cemetery Law

Inasmuch as the laws vary from state to state and municipality to municipality, I am not going to quote chapter and verse from each annotated code. This would be a burden to put together and bore you to tears anyway. I will refer to State code sections that refer to cemeteries, and direct you to [www.savinggraves.org](http://www.savinggraves.org) for more detailed information for your specific state.

REMEMBER, as long as your cemetery is “related use” to your church, your church is generally exempt from compliance of these laws. I encourage you to check with your local authorities and make sure your church is not violating any laws or jeopardizing its non-profit status.

## State Cemetery Law References

### ALABAMA

- Code Of Alabama – Section 13A-7-23.1 Desecration, defacement, etc. of memorial of dead.

### FLORIDA

- Chapter 497 – Funeral and Cemetery Services
- 704.08 – Cemeteries; rights of ingress and egress for visiting or maintenance.

- Chapter 872 – Offenses Concerning Dead bodies and Graves.
- H 3763: Cemetery Preservation and Consumer Act of 1998

## **GEORGIA**

- Code 36-72-1 – Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) Section 36-72-1 deals with abandoned and neglected cemeteries and gives authority to the county in which such a burial place is located to deal with the cemetery appropriately. It also provides for disinterment and reinterment of bodies under specified circumstances.
- Code 10-14-3 – The Georgia Cemetery and Funeral Service Act of 2000 is in Georgia Code Section 10-14-3. OCGA Section 10-14-3 (8) defines the word “cemetery” and then states in the last sentence thereof, the following:

“Such term shall not include\*\*\*cemeteries owned and operated by churches, synagogues, or communities or family burial plots.”

OCGA Section 10-14-4, which deals generally with what is lawful and unlawful for a person to do in connection with cemetery burial sites, funeral merchandise, etc., starts off by stating in Subsection (a) (1):

“unless exempt under this chapter”

As already mentioned, a church owned cemetery is not included in the definition of “cemetery” in Chapter 14 and, therefore, it would appear that none of the provisions of OCGA Section 10-14-4 nor 10-14-3 are applicable to church cemeteries.

The laws in Georgia relating to cemeteries do not appear to be of significant concern to churches.

## **KENTUCKY**

- KRS 381.690, 697, 700, 710, 715, 720, 740, 750, and 755.
- KRS 433.660.
- KRS 525.105, 110, 115, and 120.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

- NCGS Chapter 65-1 thru 65-75

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

- S.C. Code of Laws Title 39 Chapter 55 Cemeteries.

## **TENNESSEE**

- Tennessee Code Annotated
- Title 46 – Cemeteries
- Title 39 – Desecration; Honored places or flags.
- Title 68 – Disinterment; reinternment
- Case Law – Walter Hines v. State 149 SW 1058-1060 (1911)

## **OTHER STATES**

Refer to [www.savinggraves.org](http://www.savinggraves.org) or your state web site.

## **FEDERAL INCOME TAX LAWS**

Income generated by a properly qualified nonprofit organization such as a church is generally considered to be nontaxable, assuming that the church stays within the state and federal guidelines for a nonprofit organization.

I suggest you consult a certified public accountant or other person who has expertise in connection with the nonprofit status of churches and with what is permissible and nonpermissible for a church to do without adversely affecting its nontax status.

## Acquiring New Cemetery Property

The following guidelines are practical helps in property acquisition for any purpose by the church. Before the church acquires a tract of real property, by purchase, gift, or otherwise, the church should obtain answers to the following questions:

1. How much property is being acquired, where are its boundaries and what is its proper legal description?

A professional survey will set forth the amount of property included in a particular tract of land, will identify its boundaries, and provide a proper legal description. A proper legal description is necessary to legally convey ownership of the property. The survey should also reflect any visible or recorded easements, encroachments, and setbacks as well as whether the property is located in a flood plain.

2. What ownership interest does the seller or donor have in the property?

A title search performed by a title insurance company or abstract company may be used to ascertain whether the person selling or giving the property to the church actually has an ownership interest in the property and, if so, what that interest is (e.g., does the seller own 100% of the property?)

3. Are there any liens against the property?

A title search will also reveal the existence of any liens, tax or otherwise, against the property. Ascertaining the existence of any liens is important, since the transfer of property is subject to any outstanding liens not paid as part of the closing. The property may prove to be more of a burden than a benefit. For example, the amount owed to pay off an unknown tax lien on the property may be more than the property is worth and receiving a gift of the property would actually be liability rather than a benefit.

4. Are there any environmental hazards or other problems associated with the property?

A professional environmental assessment may be obtained to confirm the property is free from any environmental hazards or other concerns. This is extremely important since property “owners,” past and present, have liability for environmental cleanup of property and any damages resulting from any hazard. Liability will be present irrespective of whether the environmental damage occurred prior to one acquiring ownership.

5. What zoning governs the particular tract of land sought to be acquired?

Zoning may restrict the types of permitted uses of property to be acquired. Before acquiring a tract of land, the church should ascertain the zoning for that property and determine whether the intended use of the property by the church is an allowable use under the applicable zoning.

6. What, if any, are the future plans of the city or county in which the tract of land is located for roadways and other construction that may affect the value or use of the property?

The city or county may have maps that show planned development or expansion of roadways and public facilities.

7. Are there any defects in the improvement on the property?

A structural engineer can inspect property to determine if structural problems exist in foundations, load-bearing walls or other components of the improvements. Pest inspections can determine whether termites or other insects or rodents exist, and whether any damage has been caused to the improvement. Construction consultants can test electrical, plumbing, air conditioning, heating and other systems to determine whether any repairs or improvement would be necessary or anticipated after acquisition.

8. If a person wants to donate land to the church and expects a tax deduction for his donation, consult a professional advisor to safeguard the donor's tax position.

Additional help for gifts of real estate are in Chapter 4.

## **1. PROPERTY INSURANCE**

Property insurance provides insurance protection for losses related to the real property and contents owned by the church. For example, property coverage on the church building and contents would protect against fire, hail storm, tornado or other loss. It could even insure against vandalism or theft. A review of the policy to determine the types of risk insured against is very important.

### **a. Amount of Coverage**

The normal property insurance policy provides coverage, limited to the total amount of coverage purchased, to pay the fair market value of the property at the time of the loss, or in the case of partial destruction, the reasonable cost to repair, less depreciation. It is important to review the amount of coverage from time to time to ensure that the coverage will be sufficient to replace the insured property, due to increasing construction costs.

### **b. Replacement Coverage**

It is recommended that the church pay for an endorsement to its property coverage to provide for "replacement value" coverage. This endorsement

provides that the insurance carrier will pay for the replacement value of the property, up to the total amount of coverage purchased, which is damaged or lost (i.e., the actual cost to repair).

## **2. LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Liability coverage is available to protect the church against claims made by third parties, including members or employees, for personal injury or property damage. Because claims relate to different activities and different conduct, a church should review the different types of liability coverage it has to ensure that there are no gaps which leave the church unprotected for particular activities. The amount of insurance coverage (or policy limits) for liability policies should be determined for each church based upon its size, operations and activities.

### **a. General Liability**

General liability coverage insures the church against the majority of claims which can be made against the church resulting from personal injuries or property damage. General liability policies specifically exclude liability for certain activities, such as those that would be covered by the insurance discussed below. General liability coverage also excludes coverage for personal injury or property damage which is expected or intended by the acts of the insured.

## **3. WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

A church's general liability insurance policy will not cover personal injury claims of employees of the church suffered while in the scope of their employment. In other words, if a paid employee of the church is injured while engaged in a church activity, the church is not protected under its general liability policy and is therefore not covered on the claim. Protection for this time of claim is provided by a Workers' Compensation policy with respect to the paid employees of a church.

### **Footnote**

The preceding pages 10-12 were used by permission and are taken from the Georgia Edition of "Keeping Your Church Out of Court" – produced by the Georgia Baptist Convention, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Christian Life Commission and the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. For additional information on the above publication, call (800) 746-4422.

## Cemetery Guidelines And Policies

*“Let all things be done decently and in order.” 1Cor. 14:40*

The vast majority of local churches establish their own internal guidelines and policies regarding their church cemetery. Therefore, there is no consistent format for how these guidelines and policies are presented. There are, however, obvious similarities among the following samples that will help your church address the same basic issues as it operates its cemetery.

“Samples for you”

My objective in presenting the following samples is to allow you to see how other churches have designed their guidelines and policies. I encourage you to adapt these samples to your own church needs. If your church has a cemetery, it definitely needs guidelines and policies.

My prayer is that these samples will help your church in establishing or updating your own guidelines and policies.

“Thank You”

I want to thank the local Georgia Baptist churches that responded to a statewide mail out requesting samples of their existing documents. The following represent the very best, in my humble opinion.

# CEMETERY COMMITTEE

## **PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE:**

Our church cemetery is a memorial to the past, present and future. It is a burial garden for those we have loved and have departed from us. The cemetery is located so as to render a strong and clear impression on our senses and those passing our way. Because it stands alone in the triangle, it becomes even more important than before that it be well cared for and maintained. It can make a positive impression on the public as they view it in passing.

## **DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE:**

Give committee approval prior to any ground being broken for a burial. Determine that a crypt (vault for purposes of sanitation) is utilized in each burial. Advise users that headstones may be used if desired. Organize and implement the total care of the cemetery. Designate burial assignments plots. The committee shall keep an up-to-date journal of burial plots used and include all pertinent information on them. Keep records of all funds received for the cemetery, supervise the expenditures, and keep records with full accounting. Promote the welfare of the cemetery as the need arises. Any substantial changes or desired happenings involving the cemetery shall be submitted to the church for approval. Formulate and publish an information and guidelines bulletin that includes to whom burial plats may be issued and how they are secured, include-the maintenance fee for each burial lot and how a Certificate of Burial Rights will be issued. Also include all particulars regarding particulars involved in using a burial lot or plot.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE:**

The Cemetery Committee shall be a permanent committee. Its members shall have tenure until removed by resignation, death, or church action. There are currently six (6) members on this committee, one of which is and shall be a deacon.

# CEMETERY GUIDELINES

\_\_\_\_\_BAPTIST CHURCH

February 7, \_\_\_\_\_

1. Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church will not be required to pay.
2. Non-members will pay \$500.00 for each right to a grave lot, 5 ft. by 10 ft., even if one or more persons are buried in the grave lot, and the spaces will be properly marked. (A non-member is a person who does not belong to our Church or a person who has called for a letter, and has not placed the letter in a sister church). No family can have more spaces than the members in their immediate family. (Immediate family is husband, wife, sons and daughters). Any of the immediate family, who are not members of - \_\_\_\_\_ Church, can be buried in the immediate family plot provided they pay said fee and space is available, with the exception of member's children under 12 years of age.

The money paid for grave Lots will go into the existing perpetual cemetery Trust Fund.

Since it has been determined that each member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church has the right of a designated grave lot, any member who chooses not to be buried in \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery relinquishes the right of the grave lot. The right of members to be buried in \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery is non-transferable.

The lots already marked will be honored, but non-members will pay the fee by July 1, \_\_\_\_\_, or lose their lot.

3. The non-members who do not have lots chosen and do not have family plots will be buried in the place designated by the Church in lots set aside for this purpose.
4. All lots, members and non-members, shall be properly marked at the expense of the owner and under the supervision of the Church Cemetery Committee.

5. All local and nearby funeral homes shall be notified immediately. Payment shall be made to the Church Treasurer before the digging of the grave. If anyone has already given \$500.00 or more to the Cemetery Trust Fund, they will be entitled to a lot. Bonafide proof will be required.
6. The space prices \$500.00. 5 ft. by 10 ft., shall be altered from time to time according to the dollar value of property. It will be announced and publicized in accordance with Church rules.
7. Any person paying the asked price for a grave lot will never have to pay more, even if the price goes up. But, no person will be refunded if the price goes down. No person will be refunded the price of a right of a grave lot or lots from the existing perpetual Cemetery Fund.

A non-member who has paid for the right of a grave lot, and if the non-member chooses not to be buried in it, and chooses to sell his right of a grave lot or lots, it must be approved by the \_\_\_\_\_ Church Cemetery Committee and/or by the Church.

8. Any marker or shrubbery placed in the cemetery shall be under the supervision of the Church Cemetery Committee. (Plot markers shall be ground level).

## CEMETERY GUIDELINES

1. All burials or reserved plots shall be approved by the Cemetery Committee.
2. Plots shall be 5' wide by 10' long with corner markers.
3. Plots can only be reserved by members of \_\_\_\_\_, Baptist church for members of their family extending from grandparents to grandchildren.
4. A maximum of 4 plots can be reserved per family.
5. A family is defined as father, mother, sons and daughters.
6. Non-members will be granted a plot upon need and placed as per the Cemetery Committee.
7. It is the intent that all plots be placed and reserved in an order so that the cemetery expansion will grow evenly and uniformly, so that maintenance will not extend to the limit of the cemetery until it is full.
8. The Cemetery Committee can impose a fee on plots or graves as necessary to maintain the cemetery. A fee of \$400.00 per grave opening will be imposed upon non-members.
9. The Cemetery Committee may request that existing reserved plots may be moved in order to maintain the order of the cemetery.
10. There will be no burials as a result of cremation.

## RULES & REGULATIONS

1. No coping in new section.
2. Upright monuments only.
3. Size of monument not to exceed:
  - 4 ft length
  - 8 in thick
  - 2 ft 2 in height
4. Size of base not to exceed:
  - 5 ft length
  - 1 ft 2 in width
  - 8 in thick
5. Minimum size of monument:
  - 1 ft 6 in length
  - 6 in thick
  - 2 ft height
6. Minimum size of base:
  - 2 ft 2 in length
  - 1 ft width
  - 6 in thick
7. All monuments must be in a straight line.
8. No markers on the ground at all.
9. No shrubbery or flowers of any kind may be planted.
10. Pot Holders must be level with the ground.
11. No lots over two graves.
12. Graves start 5 feet from the road and lots are 10 feet wide and 11 feet deep from back of bases.
13. Single lots are 5 feet wide and 11 feet deep from back of bases.
14. Lots are for members and immediate family members. (husband, wife, son, daughter)
15. There is no charge for lots for members.
16. The cost for other family members is \$750.00 for 2 grave lots.
17. Monuments are to sit on a cement foundation.
18. All lettering is to be done on the upright monument.
19. Family name on both sides (preferably).
20. Any violation of these rules will be corrected at the violator's expenses.

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\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH

CEMETERY BY-LAWS

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this cemetery shall be \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church Cemetery and shall hereinafter be referred to as “the cemetery”.

**ARTICLE II: LOCATION**

The cemetery herein referenced shall be understood to be all that property currently employed as cemetery plots and any fixture property designated for use as cemetery plots on said property of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church located at \_\_\_\_\_, Georgia.

**ARTICLE III: CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

The Cemetery Committee shall consist of those trustees nominated yearly by the Nominating Committee and voted on at conference each \_\_\_\_\_. The Cemetery Committee shall have full authority over the distribution of plots located within the cemetery and shall keep a true and accurate record of a master cemetery plat that displays location of all occupied and nonoccupied plots and future plot sites.

Any and all problems or disagreements concerning cemetery that may arise shall be settled by the Cemetery Committee. In the event a disagreement cannot be satisfactorily settled by the Cemetery Committee, the matter shall be referred to the \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church Board of Deacons who will have final authority over the settlement of the matter.

**ARTICLE IV: CEMETERY PLOTS**

- A. Within this document, the term plot shall generally be understood to refer to a burial site with dimensions of 10 ft. by 10 ft.
- B. Any and all cemetery plots shall be positioned within the cemetery as per the master plat. Location of individual plots shall be agreed upon by the

procuring party and the Cemetery Committee. No plots will be established without the Cemetery Committee's approval.

- C. No plot shall be opened without the authority of the Cemetery Committee.
- D. As a condition of procurement of a plot, the procuring party agrees to mark the plot as quickly as possible with four-countersunk corner markers flush with ground level. Any and all future plots shall be required to include an underlayment of plastic or other suitable material that shall prohibit the growth of grass, weeds, and other plants within the plot. Additionally, all walled plots must include a layer of suitable ground cover within such as pea gravel, marble chips or artificial turf. The use of sand as a ground cover is prohibited. Furthermore, it shall be the responsibility of the procuring party to properly maintain its plot as per the discretion of the Cemetery Committee.
- E. The intentional growth of grass, flowers, shrubs and other live plants within existing and future plots is prohibited. Also, the intentional growth of plants, flowers, shrubs and trees within the cemetery is prohibited and they will be removed as per the instructions of the Cemetery Committee.

## CEMETERY

- A. New burial plots shall be restricted to new members of \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church who have been active and participating for at least one calendar year. To be considered active one must participate in church services and/or financial support within each three-month period. In the case of plots established prior to adoption of this policy, permission can be granted for burial of family and/or friends. Permission must be agreed upon by Cemetery Committee and family, in writing (atch 8).
- B. New burial plots in existing cemetery shall be restricted to two gravesites. New plots shall be assigned on an alternating basis (i.e., reserved). Reserved sites could then be used for family members in special cases. When children of assignees establish families of their own, they may apply for burial plots subject to stated rules. Reserved plots then become available to other church members.
- C. For information purposes, the following definitions are provided:
- a. Burial plot designates two or more gravesites.
  - b. Gravesite designates a single space.
- D. Markers should be placed on burial site within 90 days of burial.
- E. No individual shall be allowed to sell burial plots.
- F. Maintenance:
1. Maintenance of cemetery property shall be limited to grass cutting, trash and weed control.
  2. Maintenance within coping shall be the responsibility of family members.
  3. Maintenance of cemetery is part of the Maintenance Contract.

## CEMETERY PLOT MAINTENANCE FEES

A. Within this document the term "resident church member" shall refer to those individuals who are members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church and living within the community and/or are members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church. The term "resident non-church member" shall refer to members of the community who are not members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church. The term "non-resident" shall refer to those individuals who are neither members of \_\_\_\_\_ Church nor live within the community. Final decision of who qualifies as non-resident will be made by the Cemetery Committee.

B. RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBER - Resident church members may procure a plot for no fee.

C. RESIDENT NON-CHURCH MEMBER - Resident non-church members may procure a plot for no fee.

D. NON-RESIDENT- Non-residents may procure a plot for an initial maintenance fee of \$1,000. No subsequent fees are required.

E. All maintenance fees are payable in full prior to the issuance of a plot. The \_\_\_\_\_ Church will not finance these maintenance fees.

F. At such time as the maintenance fee shall be submitted in full by the procuring party to the Cemetery Committee, the Cemetery Committee shall submit to the procuring party a dated receipt referencing the name of the procuring party, location of the plot, the name of the party for which the plot was procured, and the amount of the maintenance fee received by the Cemetery Committee.

### **TRANSFER OF CEMETERY PLOTS**

A cemetery plot must be used by the party for which it is initially procured. No cemetery plot may be transferred by the procuring party to another party without the consent of the Cemetery Committee. It is recommended therefore that any party wishing to relinquish its claim to a cemetery plot should return

claim of such plot to the \_\_\_\_\_ Church.  
If such return is made within one (1) year of procurement of the plot, a full refund of the original maintenance fee will be available. After such time period, a refund of one half (1/2) the original maintenance fee will be available for a period of five (5) years from the date of the original procurement of the plot. After such time, no refund of the original maintenance fee will be available.

## **AMENDMENTS**

These by-laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at a stated business meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous regular business meeting.

**GEORGIA**

This AGREEMENT, made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, between \_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH, acting by and through the undersigned, who constitute a majority of the Board of Deacons, and pursuant to the authority vested in said Deacons at a church conference duly held on the 31st day of October, \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called First Party, and \_\_\_\_\_ of the County of \_\_\_\_\_ and State of \_\_\_\_\_, called Second Party:

**WITNESSETH**

In consideration of the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, First Party hereby gives and grants unto the Second Party the exclusive right of burial for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ members of \_\_\_\_\_ immediate family to be named by Second Party, and in the event of the failure of Second Party's nomination, to \_\_\_\_\_ heirs, subject to the restrictions against transfer as hereinafter stated, and subject to all of the conditions and limitations, and with the privileges specified in the rules and regulations of said Church pertaining to its Memorial Gardens now in existence, or which may hereafter be lawfully prescribed, in and upon that certain parcel of land situated in the \_\_\_\_\_ District of \_\_\_\_\_ and described and designated on the plot of the cemetery known as the \_\_\_\_\_ MEMORIAL GARDENS described and designated on the plot of said cemetery prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ Georgia Registered Surveyor No. \_\_\_\_\_, under date of \_\_\_\_\_, which plot is of record in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court \_\_\_\_\_, Georgia, in Plot Book \_\_\_\_\_ laid out as Grave Site No. (s) \_\_\_\_\_, in Block \_\_\_\_\_, which lies on the \_\_\_\_\_ side of the \_\_\_\_\_.

This agreement may not be transferred to any person without the written consent of First Party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Said Church, acting by and through a majority of its Deacons, has caused these presents to be executed and delivered on the day and year first above written.

\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Deacon)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Deacon)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Deacon)

Signed, sealed and delivered  
in the presence of:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Notary Public, State of Georgia.

**GEORGIA \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY**

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that \_\_\_\_\_ Church, Inc., a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Georgia, with its principal office in \_\_\_\_\_ County, Georgia, as Grantor, in consideration of the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and other valuable considerations, to Grantor in hand paid by \_\_\_\_\_, as Grantee, receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, does hereby convey unto Grantee and Grantor's heirs the right of burial of Grantee and Grantor's heirs, in Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Church New Section, in \_\_\_\_\_ County, Georgia as said lot is shown on a map or plan of said cemetery on file in the office of said \_\_\_\_\_ Church, subject to the following covenants, conditions and restrictions:

1. The right of interment hereby conveyed shall not be assignable by Grantee or Grantor's heirs except on forms supplied by \_\_\_\_\_ Church.
2. An executed transfer of title must be recorded in the office of \_\_\_\_\_ Church before it becomes a valid assignment.
3. The right of interment and any possession or use of said lot shall at all times be subject to all the rules and regulations of said cemetery now or hereafter adopted and placed on file in \_\_\_\_\_ Church office for benefit of said cemetery and the owners of the right of interment therein.
4. Grantor covenants that it will forever defend the right hereby conveyed against the claims of all persons whomsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Grantor has hereunto caused this deed to be executed by its duly authorized officer under the seal of the corporation on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed, sealed and delivered  
in the presence of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

By: \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE

# CEMETERY COMMITTEE

(Updated January \_\_\_\_\_)

## **Purpose of the Committee**

To provide for the maintenance and administration needs of the cemetery for the church.

## **Size of the Committee**

Three members

## **Method of Committee Selection**

At the end of each calendar year, the committee member that came on the earliest will rotate off the committee. The member who rotates off is not required to stay off of the committee for any extended period of time, but may be nominated to serve on the same committee the next year at the discretion of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is responsible for recommending to the church their choice for each unfilled position. The church will vote in regular church conference for all nominations recommended by the Nominating Committee.

## **Method of Chairperson Selection**

To be selected by the committee (Committee chairperson should be selected in the first month of the new committee year)

## **Responsibilities of the Committee**

1. To keep cemetery plot up to date.
2. To collect monies for the sale of lots and give proceeds received from the sale to the Financial Secretary.
3. To solicit funds for maintenance from those with family members buried there. Recommend to the Personnel Committee for employment such persons as are needed to maintain the cemetery.
4. Committee members should be free to meet with persons during the day concerning the cemetery and be able and willing to walk through the cemetery marking or locating lots.
5. Prepare a proposed budget for the Budget Committee for the upcoming Church Financial Year (January - December). This proposed budget should be prepared by the designated time set by the Budget Committee.

# CEMETERY COMMITTEE

## EFFECTIVE 8-14-\_\_

1. No walls, shrubbery, fences, or gravel to be on or around cemetery lots.
2. All new markers to be level with ground so graves can be properly maintained.
3. Ninety days after burial, graves to be level with ground.
4. Only one (1) pot of flowers on grave at one time, which is to be correctly attractive.
5. No resale of lots to anyone. If graves are to be sold, must be sold back to church. Grave lots to be sold to members only.
6. A grave lot shall consist of one grave - 5 X 10. No deeds to be issued.
7. Lots will be 300.00 per grave.
8. Money for lots to be placed in escrow for future maintenance of cemetery.
9. Funeral director will be responsible for contacting cemetery committee before opening grave. Member of cemetery committee to be present at opening of grave.

I AGREE TO ALL OF THE ABOVE.

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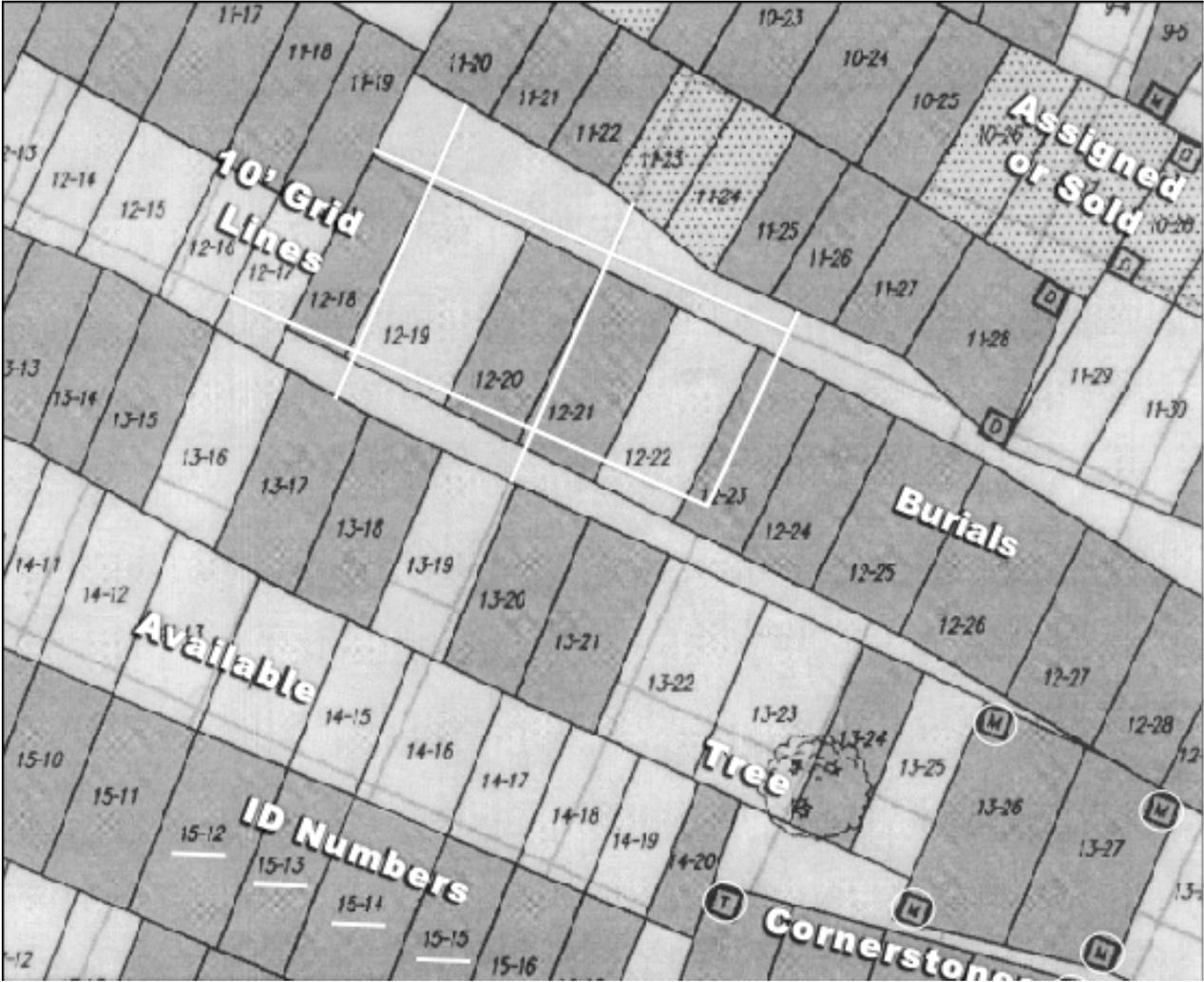
Cemetery Representative

# SAMPLE LOGBOOK PAGE

STATUS	ROW	GRV	LAST_NAME	FIRST_NAME	MID_NAME	MAIDEN	BIRTH	DEATH	VETERAN
AVAIL	1	1							
AVAIL	1	2							
BURIAL	1	3	WHITEHEAD	SALLY	A.		04/20/1944	04/02/1999	
AVAIL	1	4							
BURIAL	1	5	JACKSON	QUINCY	V.		11/25/1925	11/21/1985	PFC-ARMY
AVAIL	1	6							
AVAIL	1	7							
BURIAL	1	8	LEWIS	CLYDE	R.		10/29/1931	09/21/1992	SGT-ARMY
BURIAL	1	9	LEWIS	BONNIE	E.		1907	1977	
BURIAL	1	10	QUISENBERRY	ELIZABETH		SAMPLES	08/24/1918	10/24/1972	
BURIAL	1	11	QUISENBERRY	SANFORD	F. (JACK)		08/16/1904	04/10/1982	
AVAIL	1	12							
BURIAL	1	13	BOLEY	FRED	EDWARD		07/25/1953	08/28/1982	
RESRVD	1	14	HOWARD	PEARLIE	MAE		12/11/1898		
BURIAL	1	15	HOWARD	S.	LEFFORD		06/21/1926	05/05/1996	
BURIAL	1	16	BEELER	MYRTLE	L.		12/24/1894	12/02/1979	
BURIAL	1	17	BEELER	HERMAN	L.		07/27/1892	06/11/1956	
BURIAL	1	18	BEELER	OSBORNE	DALLAS		08/30/1916	03/23/1959	
AVAIL	1	19							
BURIAL	1	20	BEELER	JOHNNY	DALE		05/21/1945	04/28/1969	
RESRVD	1	21							
RESRVD	1	22	CS-M						
RESRVD	1	23	CS-M						
RESRVD	1	24	CS-W						
RESRVD	1	25	CS-W						
RESRVD	1	26	WYRICK	HAZEL	J.		06/18/1928		
BURIAL	1	27	WYRICK	HERMAN	W.		09/28/1925	12/23/1986	
RESRVD	1	28	WYRICK	BOBBY			07/24/1953		
BURIAL	1	29	WYRICK	RAYMOND			09/01/1918	05/18/1963	
BURIAL	1	30	BRADY	JAMES	HARVEY		08/19/1946	06/19/1946	
BURIAL	1	31	BRADY	PAULINE		WEST	02/17/1925	02/27/1967	
RESRVD	1	32	CS-W						
BURIAL	1	33	BRADY	JAMES	THOMAS		09/22/1924	05/05/1946	T5-WWII
BURIAL	1	34	BRADY	JAMES	ALEX		09/06/1898	03/27/1966	
BURIAL	1	35	BRADY	INFANT TWINS	SON & DAU	OF JAMES & JENNIE			
BURIAL	1	36	BOLEN						

Source: <http://www.cemmanager.com>

# SAMPLE LOT MAP



Source: <http://www.cemmanager.com>

## SUGGESTED SHADING SYSTEM

NO SHADING =	Lot available
MEDIUM SHADING =	Lot assigned
DARK SHADING =	Lot occupied

## **ADDITIONAL CEMETERY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

There are several providers whose products can be used for church cemeteries. Here are some that are worthy of consideration.

[www.cemmanager.com](http://www.cemmanager.com)

[www.cemeterydatabase.com](http://www.cemeterydatabase.com)

[www.pontem.com](http://www.pontem.com)

[www.tbgtom.com](http://www.tbgtom.com)

[www.omegamapping.com](http://www.omegamapping.com)

[www.architariium.com](http://www.architariium.com)

<http://www.sacredgraves.com/Milledgeville/CemeteryNavigator.html#>

# CEMETERY COMMITTEE

## INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

### FOR

### \_\_\_\_\_CHURCH CEMETERY

Burial plots will be issued to church members only, one (1) space per member desiring a space, on a first-come, first-served basis.

In order to establish a maintenance fund, a contribution of \$250.00 per lot will be required before a Certificate of Burial Rights will be issued. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.

On all lots assigned **BEFORE** May 1, \_\_\_\_\_, a maintenance fee of \$150.00 will be required at the time of interment.

Each lot will be 4' x 10' and will remain the property of \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

**HEADSTONES:** Either flat or monument type allowed. Some type of headstone or marker will be required after a burial.

**VAULTS:** Vaults **will be** required.

**FLOWERS:** Removal of funeral arrangements will be made by the maintenance department if allowed to remain more than 1 week after the burial.

Only one arrangement per grave **AFTER** burial. Please dispose of flowers in the dumpster located behind the church. Do not throw flowers on cemetery of, adjacent property.

No fencing of individual plots or permanent plants will be allowed in order to maintain a uniform appearance in the cemetery.

## How To Provide Funding For Maintaining And Improving Your Church Cemetery

*“Wherefore show them...the proof of your love.” 2 Cor. 8:24*

**H**opefully your church is one of the few that has unlimited resources to take care of the cemetery. If this is your case, then blessings on you and “may your tribe increase.” You can skip this chapter and move along.

Regretfully, most churches have some funds set aside for their cemetery but not nearly enough to meet the demands of the future.

“What To Do?” What to do? Bake sales, car washes, spaghetti suppers, special offerings, church budget or ENDOWMENT. Maintaining the cemetery is a perpetual task that must be performed until Jesus comes again. Seems to me that a perpetual task needs a perpetual fund, therefore I highly recommend, endowment.

Let’s try to grasp the advantages of the perpetual care endowment fund method vs. the unpredictable donation method. It is my ever so humble conviction that the endowment fund method should be the ultimate goal of every church to maintain and improve their cemetery.

Here’s why:

- Once the perpetual fund is adequate to generate enough income cash flow to maintain the cemetery, there will never be any need to ask anyone to give another dime for cemetery maintenance. The cemetery will be self-supporting.

- This method frees up resources for other church ministry projects such as: International Missions, North American Missions, church buildings, bible studies, evangelism and outreach ministries, student and children’s ministries, etc.
- The older generation in the congregation feels secure that the cemetery will be taken care of and will be more open to support young leaders with progressive ideas.
- With a properly managed endowment fund the church can enjoy a predictable income stream that is protected from inflation.

## *Suggestions to Help Your Perpetual Care Endowment Fund Grow*

1. Set a Goal. Example: Our goal is \$\_\_\_\_\_ by Easter Sunday \_\_\_\_\_. Remember, “If you aim at nothing your bound to hit it”.
2. Print an attractive brochure/pamphlet promoting your special fund. It should be very appealing to the eye, very tastefully worded, very personal and should enhance the image of your cause. Distribute these widely.
3. Compile a mailing list. The list needs to include all families that have any vested interest or possible interest in supporting your special fund.
4. Design and print a response envelope. The envelope should include:(see following example)
  - A full flap with space to write in the name and address of the donor.
  - Name and address of the person (s) that the gift is being made in memory or honor of.
  - Name and address of the person to whom the church is to send an acknowledgement.
  - A reminder to the donor that their gift is tax deductible.
5. Develop an Acknowledgement System. The church should mail a letter or card to the person or family indicated by the donor acknowledging the gift given in honor or memory of that person (s). Cards are available at your local Christian bookstore.

6. Do a Mass Mail Out. At an appropriate time during the year, using your mailing list described above, do a mail out to possible and existing donors. The mail out should include a letter:
  - Introducing your cause
  - A brief program report on the work that has been done and the work that is planned for the future.
  - A challenge for the recipient to help you reach your goal of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  - A response envelope making it easy for the person to make a gift.
  - A brochure/pamphlet.
7. Add gifts received to your endowment fund.
8. Publish your progress. Inform your people about how you are doing. Folks want to know what is going on.

There are other ways that individuals can give to your church besides cash or check. Typically these other types of gifts require legal documents and are referred to as “planned gifts.” The following represents some of these planned giving possibilities.

“Other Ways to Give”

### **CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY**

This giving vehicle has been around for over 150 years. Basically the donor makes a gift in exchange for an income stream with tax benefits. The payout percentage is related to the age of the donor, for example a 76 year old donor would received an 8.3 percent payout for life then at the donors death, the remainder in the annuity account would benefit the church.

### **BEQUESTS**

Through proper language in a will a person can leave a gift to your church for a designated purpose. The estate is entitled to a tax benefit for bequests to charity.

### **CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUST**

This plan can produce significant tax benefits for the donor as well as generate income for beneficiaries for life or a term of years. CRT's have been around since 1969 and are covered in section 664 of the IRS code.

### **GIFTS OF LIFE INSURANCE**

A donor can name the church as beneficiary of a policy or give a paid up policy to the church. There are other innovative ways that life insurance can benefit your church.

### **LIFE ESTATE INTEREST**

It is possible for you to give your home to the church and continue to live there as long as you wish, then at some later date or event the property belongs to the church for their use.

### **IN CONCLUSION**

In the final Chapter of this book there is an appendix entitle "Guidelines for Churches Receipts of Non-Cash Gifts." Please read this addendum for more detailed information. Also, please feel free to contact your local denominational foundation for specific help in planned gift arrangement.

Any Georgia Baptist church member is entitled to contact the Georgia Baptist Foundation for assistance. Call toll free (800) 452-9064.

## Maintaining The Cemetery

This is the hard part, the actual “sweat of the brow” that is necessary to keep your church cemetery maintained properly. The bottom line is that it is work, hard work and there are few, if any, volunteers standing in line to do it anymore. More and more churches are facing the need to employ professionals to do this work.

“The  
Sweat  
of the  
Brow”

I learned a very practical lesson years ago at the first church I served as pastor. It was the week before Mother’s Day and the church had a wonderful tradition of grooming the graveyard to look it’s best for that Special Sunday. A local farmer had donated a quart of high-powered herbicide to the church to kill the weeds in the cemetery, and another church member had volunteered to apply the chemical. By now you can probably guess what happen. The volunteer used a garden sprayer to apply the herbicide on a windy day and the chemical not only killed weeds but grass as well! Instead of the cemetery being beautiful and green on Mother’s Day, it was ugly and brown and many people in the community were very upset about what happened. Needless to say, I’ve never forgotten this experience and the lessons learned from it.

I have sought to provide practical help for maintaining your cemetery in the following articles. The source of these articles is documented and again I owe credit to [www.savinggraves.org](http://www.savinggraves.org). This web resource was an answer to prayer for me in gathering information for this book and I highly recommend this website to you for further assistance.

## GRAVEYARD MAINTENANCE

(Keeping a cemetery maintained.)

- Use signs to inform visitors of regulations and efforts of a local group to protect this historic place.
- When possible, lighting helps to deter vandals and unwanted nighttime loiterers.
- Remove scrub trees and prune shrubs to prevent damage to stones and consider replacing weedy overgrowth with close lying ground covers.
- Provide trash receptacles and have them emptied regularly.
- Provide some benches to invite local citizens to enjoy your cemetery and treat it with respect.
- Don't mow immediately around the stone or use nylon whip weed-whackers. You can often see scars on old stones that have suffered from these methods. Perhaps if you can equip the mower with a rubber guard it would help.
- Don't use commercial herbicides around stones. Even if your product is environmentally safe, the stone can wick up the chemical from the ground and, mixed with its own salts, can cause corrosive reactions.
- Don't move stones or their footstones. Making straight rows for easier mowing or to create paths is a temptation but this destroys the orientation of the yard. This leaves the marker no longer marking the grave it was set in place to memorialize. This was frequently done years ago to make way for mowing and many yards now have no visible footstones left. Where this has been done, who knows where the person memorialized is really buried.
- When cleaning up an abandoned or unkempt cemetery, please take caution to document footstone and fragments, leaving them in place or placing them near the respective headstone until the next step of cleanup can be done.

## CLEANING BASICS

- Enough with the wire brushes! Would you clean your teeth with a wire brush?
- Wire brushes, metal instruments and abrasive pads may give you instant satisfaction but, if you clean with anything that is harder than the stone, you risk scratching the face of the stone and causing more damage in the long run. The same goes for acidic cleaners, which includes most household cleaners. Power washers are also NOT recommended. Anything that puts out greater than 60 psi is too much force to use on OLD and fragile stones. A garden hose putting out a gentle soaking spray is enough to clean and flush the stone (garden type sprayers also work well).
- Stones are composed of minerals and salts. Adding chemicals to them can often cause chemical reactions that will erode the stone faster than if you just left it alone. CGN recommends that you use the following low tech method and consult with us or professionals before using other methods. Remember, we respect our monument dealers but often we are talking OLD gravestones, not the granite that has been used for the past century. Each stone may need its own diagnosis; what is good in one situation is not necessarily good for all.
- For marble, limestone and sandstone, use water and soft bristle brushes, natural or nylon. Granted it doesn't sound like a miracle cleaner and it doesn't happen quickly but with some patience and time this will clean most environmental soiling and lichens from stones. Keep the stone wet at all times; really wet. Where a garden hose is not available, be sure to bring plenty of jugs of water and keep dowsing the stone as you work and, most importantly, flush the stone well when done. Scrub the stone from the bottom up to avoid streaking and further staining.
- Household ammonia can be used if one can stand the aroma, but again be sure you flush the stone completely, more than one or two times, when you are done. Wearing proper eye protection is also a must.
- If lichen is a problem, you can scrape with a wooden or plastic scraper. Tongue blades or craft sticks work well. Also, inexpensive plastic putty scrapers from home stores work well. Remember, no metal.

- There are also poulticing techniques that can be used to soften lichen. Many lichens will, once removed, leave a searing affect on the stone because the waste product they give off is an acid that works with the stone's own salts and chemistry to erode it or bleach out some of its mineral component.

## SHOULD YOU SEAL OR WATERPROOF GRAVESTONES?

- **NO, NO, NO!** Don't seal or waterproof your gravestones. A stone has to be allowed to have air/water pass through it. Any repair or cleaning technique that would prevent this process will have later damaging effects on your stone. The stone is in direct contact with the soil and will wick up whatever is around it. That includes cleaning chemicals, herbicides and water. Sealing, waterproofing or coating the stone face with any sealing process would inhibit its ability to naturally evaporate this moisture from inside the stone. This will cause new damage and expansion problems. Thoroughly investigate the issue before making a decision on such a process.
- A consolidation process (which is costly and must be done by certified technicians) has been used on sandstones in some areas and so far has been successful. Speak to a certified conservator to learn more about this process.
- Gravestones can't be treated the same as buildings. Cleaners and products that are recommended for buildings of the same material are not to be assumed appropriate for gravestones. Unlike a building, they are buried and in direct contact with the soil and are exposed on all sides to the environment. Newer stones or granite and stones with large foundation bases may be treated differently than an old 1700's sandstone tablet.
- Conservators are learning new methods and other techniques are being tried every day; we only ask that you take the time to learn about your options before making a decision that can never be undone.

## DOCUMENTING A CEMETERY

Old cemeteries represent an important heritage resource worldwide. Unfortunately, many of the grave memorials in these cemeteries are deteriorating at an alarming rate. There is no doubt that many of the inscriptions, motifs and art designs that are faintly visible today will disappear altogether in another generation. Detailed cemetery recording provides us with a permanent record of these sites, and a point of reference for future research and conservation. The accurate transcription and publishing of cemetery records is important because it preserves the record on the marker, even if the marker itself is lost.

A uniform and systematic way of recording these heritage sites is important. What features are important to record? Where do we start? What do we do with the information when finished? All these are relevant questions faced by prospective recorders.

Documenting a cemetery should include a map detailing the organization of graves, a data recording and filing system using inventory sheets, and some historical and biographical research. Additional information gathered may include an epitaph record, condition reports, videos, and a photograph file. We highly recommend the Standards for Transcribing Cemetery Headstones as developed by B. W. Hutchison.

Before starting a recording project, check whether one has already been done. Even if an earlier recording has been made, it is worthwhile to confirm and update the data, especially grave condition, and add information that might have been omitted.

Planning for a recording project may take months of work, lots of organization and above all, commitment. The initial step is to obtain **written** permission from the managing authority or owner of the cemetery. Next, plan the recording to take place during the summer months. Make sure all the supplies are ready as needed and recorders have some knowledge of their task.

You may want to do rubbings of some of the harder to read stones. Information on the process can be found [here](#).

In the sections below you will find tips on how to best do your own recording

1. **Get written permission to enter if the cemetery is on private land.** Be respectful of the property owner's rights. Close gates and keep on roads. Don't drive across pastures or plowed ground. You want the farmer or rancher on YOUR side. You are his guest.
2. Do your registry on a bright sunny day. Many of the old stones will be badly eroded and the bright light will help you. It is also more comfortable on you; it will be a long day, usually. It can also be harder to work on a very windy day. A 5-gallon bucket makes thing to carry supplies in and at the same time you will have something to sit on. After a couple of hours, your legs begin to get tired just standing.
3. Take something along to eat and drink, as you will be there for a while. Go to the bathroom before you leave home unless you have a particular fondness for copperheads.
4. Use the sun to help you read the stones. If you are having trouble reading the old stones, record the stones facing East in the morning and the stones facing West in the afternoon. The small mirror can be used to reflect light across the face to create shadows in the engravings on the stone.
5. If the stone cannot be read after these attempts, you may want to do a rubbing of the stone.
6. The location of each cemetery should be included with directions by road mileage from the nearest major intersection or other permanent landmark.
7. **All** the markers in each cemetery should be copied, preferably in order by row number and marker number. This requirement may seem superfluous, but there are past cases where some unknown selection process was used, whereby certain markers were purposefully omitted from the survey. Do **not** omit **any** markers.
8. The markers are **not** arranged in any cemetery alphabetically. Cemetery surveys of the individual markers should be presented in the order the markers are located, usually in order by row number and marker number, and not in alphabetical order. This makes it much easier to physically locate any particular marker and maintain possible family relationships for adjacent markers. Also, in the event any marker

becomes missing or illegible, it is possible to determine its exact location within the cemetery.

9. Last but not least, when you leave the cemetery, clean up after yourself and others. Take nothing but pictures and leave nothing but tracks.

## CLEANING A GRAVESTONE

Cleaning Gravestones can prove to be a tedious and difficult job, however with the right knowledge and materials it is possible.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- **Soft-bristle brush**  
Metallic brushes are entirely too harsh, and they also leave particles on the surface of the stone that can rust.
- **Small, soft, slanted paintbrush** - To clean debris and critters out of lettering or carvings
- **At least one large sponge**
- **Water**  
You may also want to bring a small spray bottle of water for gently cleaning dirt and debris from the stone. The spray bottle, should contain only water and not detergent or chemicals of any kind that would damage and further erode the stone's material. You might want to use Photo Flo, which is made by Kodak and used in photo developing. Mix one cupful per gallon of water. Wash stone with solution, then rinse stone with
- clean water. Use brush
- **Towel or old rags**  
Used to kneel on or clean polished granite stones. Launder them first, but do NOT use fabric softener. The softener will affect their ability to absorb liquids as well as cutting down on the "magnetism" for dirt and dust.
- **Hand cleaner**  
Bring along a sample size of antibacterial waterless hand cleaners or wipes.

- **Cutting Tool** - Hand-held grass clippers, scissors or a retractable razor knife for trimming grass and/or weeds close to the stones. Do NOT use weed whacker type trimmers as these can scar the stones. For site clearing/cleaning, a pair of pruning shears or hedge clippers is also helpful for brush that is too thick to rip out or cut with grass clippers, but not thick enough to bother with a chain saw.
- **Pencil and Notepad** to record information about the stone or cemetery location.

In addition, you will want to also look at taking along the following safety items:

- **Drinking water** - plan to bring at least several quarts of water with you for drinking, apart from the water you use for washing the stones.
- **Sunscreen**
- **Gloves** - Both work gloves and rubber gloves.
- **Work Boots**
- **Long-sleeved shirt**
- **Insect repellent**
- **First Aid kit**
- **Snakebite kit**
- **Bee and wasp spray**
- **Cellular phone**
- **Safety goggles**
- **Antibacterial liquid soap** and or **waterless instant hand sanitizer**
- **Protective hand lotion**
- **Ivy Block** (for poison ivy, oak and sumac)

## ABOUT STAINS AND STAIN REMOVAL

Before you attempt to remove a stain, it is extremely important to know what has caused it. If you don't know, it is highly recommended that you consult a stone specialist

*Avoid using chemicals of any kind until you know which chemical cleaner to use. Certain chemicals will react with the spilled material, and could make the stain permanent.*

Removing stains from marble or granite can prove difficult. These stones are porous materials, and if not thoroughly sealed they will be susceptible to staining. The only way a stain can be removed is to use a safe chemical that will pull it out of the stone and an absorbent material that will soak up the stain. This chemical absorbent-material combination is commonly referred to as a poultice.

Poultices are commonly powder or cloth materials that can be mixed with a chemical and placed on top of the stain. Refer to the table below for some of the more common poultice materials. Clays and diatomaceous earth are safe and readily available, but do not use whiting or clays containing iron with an acidic chemical; iron will react with the acid, and may cause rust staining. It is best to purchase powders that are designed specifically for stone and tile. Consult a stone restoration specialist or your stone supplier if in doubt.

### **Poultice materials:**

Paper towels Cotton balls Gauze pads Clays such as attapulgite, kaolin, fuller's earth Talc Chalk (whiting) Sepiolite Diatomaceous earth Methylcellulose Flour Saw dust How to apply a poultice

### **To apply a poultice, take the following steps:**

1. Clean the stained area with water and stone soap. Remember to blot rather than wipe.
2. Pre-wet the stained area with a little water. Distilled water is recommended.
3. Refer to the chart and determine which chemical to use for the stain.
4. Mix the poultice material with the selected chemical. Mix until a thick peanut-butter paste consistency is obtained.
5. Apply the paste to the stained area, overlapping the stain by at least 1/4. Do not make the application too thick, or it will take a long time to dry.
6. Cover the paste with a plastic sandwich bag or food wrap. Tape the plastic using a low-contact tape.
7. Allow the paste to sit for 12-24 hours.
8. Remove the plastic cover and check to see if the paste has dried. If it has not, allow it to sit uncovered until thoroughly dry.
9. Once it is dry, remove the paste by scraping and rinse the area.
10. Examine the stain. If it still remains, but is somewhat lighter, re-poultice until it is gone. If the stain refuses to disappear completely, it is time to give up, replace the tile or call a stone specialist.

*Stain removal can be very difficult, and care must be taken when using a poultice.*

(The above information from The National Training Center for Stone and Masonry Trades)

## BEFORE STARTING

Practice on a rock at home, or check with a local monuments store to see if you can practice on one of their tombstones, before going to the cemetery.

In the case of cemeteries located on private property, remember that you are doing rubbings on someone else's property. It is ALWAYS advised to gain permission by attempting to speak with the property owner, and explain what you want to do, BEFORE you begin. If you do not get permission, please respect the wishes of the cemetery and ask if you can take a photograph to record the information and condition of the stone. If you find that a gravestone is severely damaged, please notify the property owner or supervisor of the cemetery.

## AT THE CEMETERY

- Before starting, all surfaces of the stone should be checked. If there is any question as to the stone's condition, **do not attempt to clean it**, as the surface could be irreparably damaged in the process.
- Start with a test patch of your proposed cleaning technique on an area of the structure that is least visible.
- The stone surface should be thoroughly pre-soaked with water.
- Thoroughly wash with plain water the pre-wetted stone with natural, soft bristled (natural or nylon), wooden-handled brushes of various sizes.
- The use of plastic handles is not recommended, as colors from the handles may leave material on the stone that will be very difficult to remove. Wire brushes, metal instruments and abrasive pads may give you instant satisfaction but, if you clean with anything that is harder than the stone, you risk scratching the face of the stone and causing more damage in the long run. Be thorough. Wash all surfaces. Scrub the stone from the bottom up to avoid further streaking and staining. Always watch carefully to make sure that none of the stone's surface is eroding as you scrub. Rinse thoroughly, with lots of clean water.

- Keep the stone wet at all times; really wet. Where a garden hose is not available, be sure to bring plenty of jugs of water and keep dousing the stone as you work and, most importantly, flush the stone well when done.
- Remove bird droppings, dirt moss, lichen etc. from the stone if possible. This will insure clear and sharp copy. If lichen is a problem, you can scrape with a wooden or plastic scraper. Tongue blades or craft sticks work well. Also, inexpensive plastic putty scrapers from home stores work well. Remember, no metal. **If you have any trouble getting any of these materials off the stone, STOP and be sure that you do not cause any damage the stone in your attempt to clean it.**
- If used, do not allow detergent solutions to dry on the stone while cleaning.
- Some stains in porous stones cannot be removed. Do not expect the stones to appear new after cleaning.
- Do not clean marble, limestone, or sandstone more than once every 18 months. These types of stone may occasionally be rinsed with clean water to remove bird droppings and other accretions. Granite can be cleaned as needed.

## AFTER CLEANING

Keep a record of the cleaning, including date of cleaning, materials used and any change in condition since last cleaning (such as missing parts, graffiti, and other damage). These records should be kept at a central location where the condition of the stone can be monitored over time. Saving Graves will be happy to store this information as a part of a cemetery protection association listing.

## STONE REPAIR ADHESIVES

Over the years, a variety of adhesives have been used to repair interior and exterior stonework. These include polyesters (e.g., AKEMI, Chemo lit), acrylics (e.g., Acryloid B-72, Acryloid B48N) and epoxies (e.g., Sika 35 hi-mode LV, CPD Epoxcrete LV).

Of these, epoxies are the only type of adhesive recommended by both conservators and adhesive manufacturers for adhering stone in an exterior setting.

## **Concerns About Epoxies**

Epoxies are strong, durable adhesives well suited to repairing stonework. They do, however, have two main drawbacks that you should keep in mind when using them. First of all, epoxies have very few solvents. This means that once they have set it is very difficult to dissolve a joint without harming the stone. Secondly, they have a tendency to yellow from exposure to light (especially the ultraviolet component of the light spectrum). This means you should work neatly, cleaning up all spills and overruns (especially on the surface of the stone) and take extra care to ensure that stones are in proper alignment before adhering pins. To avoid mistakes, give epoxies your fullest attention.

## **What is an Epoxy?**

Epoxies come in two parts, resin and hardener. The ratio of resin to hardener - defined either in terms of volume or weight - is crucial and should not be changed. The West System™ is a brand of epoxy that comes with pumps (one each for the can of hardener and resin) that dispense accurate amounts of each component.

## **Wet Stone versus Dry Stone**

The condition of the stone you are repairing (i.e., damp or dry) will affect the epoxy you choose. Dry stone (i.e., pieces that have been in the shop over the winter) can

be repaired with most epoxies. Exterior stonework (i.e., stone that cannot be moved indoors), however, is a different situation. It requires an epoxy that will work with damp stone. Both Sika 35 hi-mode LV and CPD Epoxcrete LV can be used.

## **Curing**

Once the hardener and resin are mixed together the epoxy begins to cure. Cure time is the time it takes an epoxy to go from the liquid to the solid state. The "cure" has three distinct phases: open time, initial cure and final cure. The open time (i.e., pot life) is the amount of time that the epoxy is liquid and workable. The initial cure phase takes place once the epoxy reaches a gel state. At this point, the epoxy is no longer sticky. Once gelled, it can be shaped with a file or plane but is not hard enough to sand. The final cure takes place when the epoxy is hard and dry. At this point, the epoxy has "set" and will have acquired

most of its strength (~90%). It will continue to cure for several days after it has set.

## **Curing Time**

The time it takes for an epoxy to cure depends upon the epoxy (each will be slightly different); ambient temperature (i.e., the higher the temperature, the faster the cure); size of batch; and shape of mixing container. Epoxies are "exothermic," meaning that they give off heat as they cure. This heat can shorten pot life. Larger batches create more heat than smaller batches. As a result, smaller batches will have a longer working time than larger ones. Large open mixing containers will dissipate this heat and slow down the cure time whereas containers with a small surface area (e.g., a paper cup) cannot dissipate heat as well and will speed up the cure. Manufacturers recommend mixing epoxies in plastic, metal or paper containers due to the heat that is generated. They do not recommend foam or glass containers.

Be certain to read and follow the manufacturer's mixing instructions carefully. Do not deviate from the specified proportions of resin to hardener. Do not try to affect cure time by altering the ratio of hardener to resin.

## **Gel versus Low Viscosity**

Epoxies are available as a gel (i.e., thick) or in a low viscosity format (i.e., runny). The "LV" in CPD Epoxcrete denotes that it is a low viscosity epoxy. Adding modifiers can always thicken a low viscosity epoxy but a gel epoxy cannot be thinned. A gel epoxy can be made slightly less viscous by heating. Conservators often choose a low viscosity epoxy as it allows them to carry out a variety of tasks (e.g., pinning & crack stabilization) with the same material. Choose the form of epoxy that best suits your needs.

## **Modifying Epoxies**

Epoxies can be modified (i.e., thickened) by adding fillers. Modifiers turn a low viscosity epoxy into a gel epoxy. Conservators commonly use glass micro balloons (also referred to as "glass beads") as filler. Glass micro balloons, as the name implies, are tiny microscopic bubbles of glass. Micro balloons have been used by the boating industry for years to create strong, lightweight crafts (e.g., sailboards). Stone dust is not used as a modifier as it does not thicken up the epoxy. Save the stone dust for coloring repainting mortar.

## **Adding Modifiers**

Modifiers should be added once you have completely mixed the resin and hardener together. Start with a small amount of epoxy as the modifiers add considerable bulk (i.e., your epoxy will "grow"). Micro balloons are lightweight and hard to control so add glass micro balloons a bit at a time until the desired consistency (similar to mayonnaise) is reached.

Consider mixing epoxy and micro balloons in a plastic bag with a zipper closure (e.g., a plastic freezer bag). First, completely mix the hardener and the resin (either in another container or directly in the bag) and then add the micro balloons. Seal the bag and knead the two together. The bag keeps the micro balloons from flying away and makes mixing neat and easy.

## **Adhering Pins**

A better bond between stone and pin will be obtained if the surface of the stone is first "primed" with a coat of unmodified (i.e., no micro balloons) epoxy. Once primed, the pin (degreased first with acetone) can be installed using the thickened epoxy as the adhesive.

## **Spill Cleanup**

Keep plenty of acetone on hand in case of epoxy spills or overruns. Be certain to use acetone in a well-ventilated area and wear protective gloves.

## **Solvents and Epoxies**

Solvents such as alcohol and acetone are often used to clean out drill holes or wet out stone prior to injecting epoxy. Solvents can affect the rate at which epoxies cure. In general, alcohols (e.g., isopropanol) tend to speed up the cure time whereas acetone (the solvent commonly used to clean up epoxy residue and spills) slows it down. Mineral spirits (a common degreasing solvent) are neutral and have no effect on the speed of cure.

## **Fine Crack Repair**

Low viscosity epoxy can be used to stabilize fine cracks. Keeping the epoxy in the crack and off the surface of the stone has always been a challenge. Traditionally, artist's clay has been used as a damming material. Unfortunately, the clay can leave residue on the stone. Alternatively, consider using hot melt

glue. This glue is readily available and easy to use. Once the epoxy has reached the initial cure stage (i.e., gel stage), the hot melt glue can be removed using a hot air gun. At that point, any epoxy (now gelled) on the surface of the stone can be carefully removed.

## GLOSSARY

### **Pot life:**

Pot life refers to the amount of time you have to work with an adhesive prior to it beginning to cure. "Five Minute" epoxies, as the name implies, give you five minutes of pot life. Choose an epoxy according to the working time you require. Pot life is dependent upon temperature. Cooler temperatures will slow down the cure time of an epoxy and lengthen its pot life. Conversely, higher temperatures will speed up the cure time and shorten the pot life.

### **Shelf Life:**

Shelf life is the amount of time an adhesive can be stored before use. Most epoxies have a shelf life of one year although some manufacturers claim their products can be kept much longer. Buy epoxies in small quantities and from a reputable supplier who keeps fresh stock. Remember that shelf life refers to the time an epoxy can sit on the shelf, whether it be on the stores or yours. A manufacturer will not guarantee an adhesive that has exceeded its shelf life.

### **Safety Notes**

Read and heed the safety guidelines laid down by the epoxy manufacturers. In addition, obtain and have on hand (it is the law), the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) (available from the manufacturer) for the product you are using. Epoxies should be treated with respect. The hardeners used in epoxies can cause skin irritation and, in some cases, a permanent skin allergy. Wear protective gloves (and a barrier cream if possible) at all times when handling uncured epoxies. Once cured, epoxies should cause no irritation. Use epoxies in well-ventilated areas and always wear eye protection.

**This Stone Repair Adhesives conservation note was prepared by Sue Maltby, Conservator. It may be reproduced without permission or penalty. Credit to the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation would be appreciated.**

## CARING FOR IRON FENCING

Ornamental iron fences and gates surround many houses of worship, churchyards, and cemeteries. Designed to complement the architectural style of the building, they may be constructed of: wrought iron hammered over an anvil and bent into thin shapes; cast iron molded in foundries; or modern mild steel, which is easily worked. The best way to maintain ironwork is to keep an intact paint coating over all surfaces. In addition, joints should be protected with a flexible sealant -- usually polyurethane. It is essential to keep iron protected from the damaging effects of water -- iron's worst enemy --, which causes bare metal to rust immediately upon contact. Water that enters unprotected cracks and joints of cast iron elements causes it to rust from the inside or fracture from expansion during freeze/thaw cycles.

Inspect metal work twice each year to identify items such as: rust spots, peeling paint, and failed sealants; loose and rusty fasteners, straps, and joints; cracks; missing components; deterioration at connections to masonry walls, steps, and coping stones; and unstable footings. Keep records of inspections and maintenance actions, including complete information on the paints, sealants, and other materials used for repair.

An owner and contractor can often undertake routine maintenance, such as repainting, sealing joints, and replacing fasteners, however, more extensive repairs, paint removal, and restoration should also involve a qualified architect or building conservator to develop project specifications. Before undertaking any work, check with local municipal agencies (including landmark commissions) to ensure that the work is not in violation of any laws.

Maintain ironwork in good condition by repainting every three to four years, typically with brush-applied high-gloss alkyd paint. Hand scrape, chip, and wire-brush loose paint and light rust, and clean the surface thoroughly before painting, and wear protective gear at all times. Small defects can be patched with filler compounds and minor cracks sealed. Major cracks often require replacement of components. Complete removal of paint to bare metal may be specified in certain areas like newel posts, rosettes, and finials to restore crisp details or expose structural defects. All areas of exposed bare metal must be coated with a quality metal primer before painting. Old paint that is tightly adhered may be left in place if it is compatible with proposed coatings.

Rust and loose paint should be removed before repainting iron. The restored Gothic Revival-style cast iron fence at First Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, is a significant architectural feature.

Paint stripping methods commonly used on iron fences include caustic chemical gels or pastes that contain the residue in a plastic covering, and mechanical grinding with devices that vacuum hazardous particles into filters. For both minor surface preparation and paint stripping, the ground and adjacent surfaces should be covered with sheeting to collect debris and workers should be protected. On some projects, the job-site should be enclosed or entire fences removed to a shop. For additional information about maintaining iron fences, contact the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Be aware that historic ironwork is often coated with layers of lead paint, unless it was stripped to bare metal and repainted with lead-free modern paints in recent decades. Adjacent soil may be contaminated from fallen paint chips and debris from previous paint removal. Testing for the samples and soil cores to a State-accredited environmental testing laboratory. (Do-it-yourself lead test kits are less reliable.) Never allow maintenance personnel, volunteers, or contractors to remove lead paint without following current environmental and labor regulations.

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## Footnote

The majority of this chapter was used by permission from [savinggraves.org](http://savinggraves.org). I encourage you to visit their website for additional information that may help your church.

## Credits, Disclaimers And Appendices

First, I really don't completely understand why the Lord led me to this task of investing time and resources in the preparation of this book, but I am indeed thankful for His inspiration and for His presence and guidance "Thank You" in my life. There is a great sense of ministry fulfillment in providing this book to help churches and I know that this spiritual satisfaction comes from the Lord Jesus Christ whom I came to know personally as my savior some forty-eight years while attending revival services at the Mt. Harmony Baptist Church in Mableton, Georgia.

Secondly, I could have never accomplished this task without the assistance of my executive administrative assistant, Ruth Ruiz. Ruth is a godsend to the ministry of the Georgia Baptist Foundation in many ways but especially in her desktop publishing and word processing skills. Thank you Ruth!

I also want to thank Larry S. Bryant, Attorney At Law, for his help in interpreting Georgia Cemetery Law. He can be reached at his office in Suwanee, Georgia at (770) 831-2552.

## **DISCLAIMER**

Nothing in this book is to be perceived as legal or tax advice for an individual or a church. The information in this book is for educational purposes only and you should seek professional help regarding your own particular situation.

This book is a part of the resources ministry of the Georgia Baptist Foundation, Inc.

## APPENDIX I

### **Cremation: The Church's Response:**

Regardless of your feelings about cremation, it is growing in popularity among Americans. In 2006, 34% of deaths used cremation for final disposition. It is predicted that by 2025 over 50% of Americans will choose this option.

### Columbariums

**What is it?** A columbarium is a designated area of the cemetery for cremation remains interment.

**Two Types** - First you can designate an area of ground for “barial niches”, or the niches could be above ground in a “free standing” structure.

### **Considerations:**

- Niches size should be 12”x12”x12”
- Memorial face plate/markers may be bronze, granite or marble
- The face plate/markers cover only one niche per interment

**Other Options:** The church may develop policies on lot/plat use for cremation remain interment.

### **Space Needs Increasing?**

It only makes sense for churches to consider “columbariums” as demand increases for burial space.

An excellent resource for additional information is [www.architarium.com](http://www.architarium.com)

## APPENDIX II

# GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES RECEIPT OF NON-CASH GIFTS

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### **Gifts of Stock**

Every year individuals give stock to their church. Stocks come in basically two categories, common and preferred. Stocks are either closely held or publicly traded. Sometimes the securities are shares in a stock mutual fund.

In any case, transfers of stock are as much an art as they are science. In some cases the individual has the stock certificates in hand and in other cases the stocks are in the street name in a brokerage account. Every situation is unique and requires gathering specific information to facilitate the transfer to the church. Call the Foundation for assistance in your specific situation.

### **Gifts of U.S. Savings Bonds**

Regretfully, series E and EE, H and HH government savings bonds are non-marketable and cannot be transferred to the church. The individual owner of these bonds may cash them in and give the cash to the church

### **Gifts of Real Estate**

Suppose an individual wanted to give the church some land. Again, the church needs to ask itself some basic questions.

- 1) Is this land that the church can use for site expansion?
- 2) Is the property marketable?
- 3) Are there environmental concerns on the property?
- 4) What kind of appraisal will the IRS require for the donor to protect his/her tax deduction?
- 5) How is the fair market value established?

- 6) What about IRS forms 8283 and 8282?
- 7) Would it be better for the donor to sell the land and give cash to the church?

Call the Foundation for assistance in your specific situation.

### **Gifts of Life Insurance**

There are many methods of giving life insurance such as: naming the church as primary beneficiary, secondary beneficiary, remainder beneficiary of a settlement agreement, annual dividends can be assigned to the church, a paid up policy as a gift, or purchase a new policy for the church. Again, flexibility is a key word to gifts of life insurance and every donor's situation is different. Call the Foundation for assistance in your specific situation.

### **Gifts Through retirement plans**

More and more individuals are seeing the benefits of naming the church as a beneficiary of a qualified retirement plan. The basic motivational concept is this; it is best to transfer taxable assets to charity and non-taxable assets to heirs because of the significant tax consequences of passing taxable assets to heirs. It gets kind of technical but when retirement plan proceeds are paid to heirs it is called "Income in Respect of Decedent" and is taxable to heirs but is not taxable if left to charity. Call the Foundation for assistance in your specific situation.

### **Gifts of tangible personal property**

Property such as coin collections, artwork, jewelry, etc., can be given to your church. There can be serious penalties for over-valuation of such items and the IRS specifies the type of documentation required to substantiate such gifts. Call the Foundation for assistance in your specific situation.

### **General Comments**

#### Valuation Issues –

- What is the stock worth?
- How much will the donor tax deduction be?
- How is the fair market value of the real estate established?

- What is the “tattletale rule”?
- On what date is the transaction complete?
- Is there any carry-over of the deduction for future years?
- Are there limits to the amount the donor can deduct in one year?
- December 30<sup>th</sup> or Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>? Which date is best?

Again, depending on each donor’s tax situation, the type of asset and other variables, every situation is unique.

Since 1941 the Georgia Baptist Foundation, Inc., the Trust Agency of the Georgia Baptist Convention, has helped individuals and churches in this area of Christian Stewardship. Please feel free to call or write us for assistance at 6405 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097, (770) 452-8338 or (800) 452-9064. Non-cash gifts can be a viable source of mission dollars for your church. Do not be discouraged by the complexity of the transaction, call us for help.

*This is provided to Georgia Baptist churches for information purposes only and is not intended to be used as a form of legal or tax advice.*

## APPENDIX III

### How To Become A Christian

You're not here by accident. Jesus loves you, and He wants you to have a personal relationship with Him. There is just one thing that separates you from God. That one thing is sin.

People tend to divide themselves into groups - good people and bad people. But God says that every person that has ever lived is a sinner, and any sin separates us from God. That includes you and me.

*"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. " Romans 3:23*

According to man's rules, people should be punished or rewarded according to how good they are, and it might be hard for you to understand how Jesus could love you when other people don't seem to. But I have great news for you! Jesus DOES love you! More than you can ever imagine! And there's nothing you can do to make him stop!

Are you thinking that you should make things right in your life before you come to Jesus? Many people feel that way, but that's not what God says!

*"God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. " Romans 5:8*

For you to come to God you have to get rid of your sin problem. But God says that you can't make yourself right with God by being a better person. God wants to save you JUST BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU!

*"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. " Titus 3:5*

It's God's grace that allows you to come to Him - not your efforts to "clean up your life" or work your way to Heaven. You can't earn it. It's a free gift.

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. " Ephesians 2:8-9*

For you to come to God, your sin must be paid for. God's gift to you is His son, Jesus, who paid the debt for you.

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. "*  
*Romans 6:23*

Jesus paid the price for your sin and mine by giving His life on Calvary's cross. God brought Jesus back from the dead and paved the way for you to have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus.

All that's left for you to do is to accept the gift that Jesus is holding out for you right now.

*"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord, " and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." Romans 10: 9-10*

God says that if you believe in His son, Jesus, you can live forever with Him in glory.

*"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. " John 3:16*

Are you ready to accept the gift of eternal life that Jesus is offering you right now? If it is your sincere desire to ask Jesus to come into your heart as your personal Lord and Savior, then talk to God from your heart through the Sinner's Prayer:

### **Sinner's Prayer**



“Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I do not deserve eternal life. But, I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in Heaven for me. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins and save me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation and I accept your free gift of eternal life.”

If you have trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, please let us know. We want to rejoice in what God has done in your life and help you to grow spiritually.

If you have questions or concerns you would like help with, please call or write and let us know. We're here to help you understand the love that Jesus is offering you for free, no matter who or where you are. E-mail us at [plan@sbcc.net](mailto:plan@sbcc.net), call (615) 244-2355, or write to us at:

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We would like to help you connect with a church in your home community.