

**LEARNING GUIDE for
THE COVENANT & CODE OF ETHICS
Update & Recommendations
10/15/24**

Background: In 2021, the national Leadership Team affirmed the recommendation of the Sub-committee on Revisions to the Covenant and Code of Ethics (COE) to publish an updated companion Learning Guide, as was done in 2006 for the previous version of the COE. A Call for the Editorial Team was shared via our newsletter and an eight-person team diverse in life background, insights and ministry contexts was assembled by Fall.

Team/Timeline: The Editorial Team included Rev. Jacki Belile, CPC; Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Dyer; Rev. Dr. Juan Gutierrez-Rodriguez; Rev. Dr. Mary Day Hamel ~ miller; Rev. Jerrod H. Hugenot; Rev. Dr. Florence Li; Rev. Dr. Randle "Rick" Mixon; and Rev. Alan V. Ragland, D. Min. A pre-visioning meeting was held, and the project began in February 2022. We met actively through January 2023 and completed an approximately 32- page English-language manuscript. We worked in these phases:

- a) Early visioning sessions naming “big picture” commitments for the Guide (see below)
- b) Group Reading and Discussion of the entire Code of Ethics, enumerating key themes
- c) Individual drafting assignments, divided among all members of team
- d) Group feedback and modest revisions for streamlining
- e) Plans set for an external editor to review for unity, style, formatting prior to Focus Group release

Commitments: We held the following commitments self-consciously from the beginning.

- a) To include relevant Scriptures and questions, as had the 2006 Guide;
- b) To be mindful of the distinctives that Baptists bring to ethical ministerial leadership;
- c) To refrain from making Euro-American settings the cultural norm for ministerial leadership;
- d) To honor the ministries within and outside of the local church, so as to meaningfully support and learn from those in specialized ministries;
- e) To inspire a living document -translated into multiple languages- for ongoing engagement, COLLABORATION and interactivity by inviting a post-publication open-source gathering of relevant stories, case studies, and further reading.

Delay: Copies were shared (without prior review) with the REMC in June 2023 and an overview was given at an ad hoc “MC Live” session in November 2023. Regrettably, the completion of the Focus Group Cycle and Final Editing has been delayed since then, but will be completed in the Fall 2024. This very week, members of the Editorial Team are evaluating a “move forward” plan for Fall 2024. This would include:

- a) The Team’s re-reading suitable to the context of Fall 2024 vs Winter 2023 (social divisions, AI, other?)
- b) Assessing the REMC feedback from June 2023 and discerning threads of editorial impact
- c) A “Public Commentary Window”-- a minimum of four “at-large” plus various constituency-specific groups between 10/15 and 11/18, as well individuals’ commentary. A standardized criteria for Focus Groups and evaluation tools will be devised. If this plan is approved, we hope to hand to external editor before the holidays.