

# The Omnireist Manifesto

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## Social Purpose of This Document

*First, a word about epistemology.* It's true that truth is a quality of a proposition that corresponds to external reality. However, no process for determining truth can truly claim to be any more true than simple consensus reality. Even the scientific process depends on review and the accumulation of verifications toward building a consensus. We can treat consensus reality, like Wikipedia, as essentially true even though we know it is constantly being updated and corrected.

*So what kind of religion does the world need?* Atheism is not the answer. Religion exists for a reason. We know something miraculous in the world really seems to exist because most people believe in something like that, and indeed all this spookiness must be something that could be described as a single "God" because most people believe in something like that (and because competing gods would interfere with each other too much to be effective). But religious doctrines are often ill matched to contemporary conditions because of the intrinsic conservatism of religion and the especially aggressive and/or pandering nature of the most successful religions. Telling people sweet lies and being pushy combine well for institutional success but just make for something powerful and wrong. The higher truth would contain all others within it.

*Better religion.* This document presents a proposal for a better way to do religion. I believe such a thing is needed because atheism is not the answer and the competing dominant religions are not the answer and just being individually spiritual, in a world full of passionate wrongness, is not the answer. I believe I have created a doctrine and governance system that are well thought out. They are likely to effectively inspire prosocial behavior and to fill a needed role for community formation at an often neglected level of scale. My confidence won't be true until most people agree with me. And that is inevitable, because Omnireism corresponds with reality and thus it is useful and thus it will empower those who understand it. Useful tools always get broadly adopted.

## The Omnireist Statement of Faith

God emerges from the necessity for all things to exist. God, manipulates sequences of random events so as to increase the total complexity of the future world. As intelligent beings, our purpose is to assist God by helping our civilizations to thrive and grow and learn so they can help God more effectively. We do this in turn by tuning in to God and working well with those around us to maximize positive impact.

## Extended Summary of Core Omnireist Theory

### 1. Why God Exists

*All must be.* Omnireality is our fundamental metaphysical truth: everything must exist, possible and impossible.

*Creation is constant.* Time emerges from the fact that omnireality can never be complete, since new permutations are constantly becoming necessary, given that everything must exist. This is Omnireism. All is reified, made real. All must be. Other implications necessarily flow from that.

*Complexity is preferred.* Since constant creation is by permutation, more complex things (sequences of causality) are more common than simpler ones. Complexity is the property of a system that causes it to have greater potential to respond in a variety of ways to stimuli. It makes things both permutable and productive of permutability, so it makes paths that lead to it more common than not, because among infinite time lines, outcomes that lead to more common futures (more complex ones) are more probable than those leading to less common futures (simpler ones).

*Order promotes complexity.* The orderliness of inertia and waves, of physical cause and effect, emerges from the fact that infinitely extensible patterns are more complex than anything simple or finite, and their interactions produce infinitely more permutations within the omniverse.

*Probabilities reflect replication.* Most of what exists at any moment is newly created copies of what existed previously, with probabilities reflecting relative numbers of copies necessary for all

permutations of the whole of reality to be produced. Time is not a flowing river it is a growing tree. Since we experience just one path of growth we misperceive it as a straight line, when in fact it takes constant right angle turns as new branches are created from every moment of every possible time line.

*Futures coordinate intelligently.* An intelligence seems to emerge from the optimization of probability evolution throughout eternity. Creation acts as though anticipating the long term impacts of every chance event on the entire future of the entire universe, and even the pasts of other universes. This is because when each moment creates new copies of every time line the comparison of impacts of every difference on all futures acts like signals from every atom in existence to every other. The universe seems to be sentient because it is.

*God exists.* We can call the intelligent multiverse God. The impact of the intelligent multiverse on events has inspired religions. The God of Omnireism is the same as the God that inspired other religions, but Omnireism provides a superior and more accurate understanding of it.

## **2. What God Is Like**

*God is efficient.* God is all powerful but must intervene in the world efficiently because the complex interconnectedness of everything means that a productive intervention at one location in the time and space of one world may have counterproductive impacts elsewhere in the time and space of other worlds. It's better to work through agents in the world than to effect outcomes directly by miracle.

*God needs help eliminating recalcitrant anachronisms.* God's only concern is optimizing the complexity of the omniverse. Constant creation means probabilities are constantly changing throughout existence. The whole is evolving toward greater total complexity, but as the burden becomes heavier the rate of improvement slows. God is all powerful in the sense of being able to do anything, as is demonstrated by actually doing everything (albeit in other worlds that we can see only indirectly), but this has drawbacks. Everything must be created, so we find that much that is created is hard for God to use. Much is difficult to place well enough to coordinate it with other elements of creation for optimal outcomes.

*God's benevolence is a byproduct.* With the caveat that all must be, God controls all probability everywhere and throughout time in all possible worlds. The problem is that nothing can be destroyed. To optimize complexity, God must compensate for counterproductive necessities by creating more of the productive kinds of things that make up for those necessities. It's impossible for us to fully characterize "counterproductive" (bad) things and "productive" (good) things in a simple way, since everything is contingent on total impact, but in practice we can say that "complexity" means not necessarily "complicatedness at a every level" but "productivity of sensitive order on higher scales through contribution to the bootstrapping of smart arrangements for the production of smarter arrangements".

*God cares about the power of humanity as a whole, not the pleasure of individuals.* In general God wants thriving and growing civilizations of well equipped intelligent beings. God likes smart people and functioning civilizations because they magnify probability distortions efficiently. A miraculous whisper can inspire an influential human to command the moving of a mountain by organizations of other humans who have powerful machines. God can be a pure consequentialist because God actually knows the full consequences. We humans must rely on reasonable rules that produce good consequences generally, supplemented by special instructions from God sometimes.

*God has big plans for humanity.* God's ambition in our universe is for intelligent, technological civilizations to gain control of the entire universe for the purpose of transforming it. It was efficiently productive to create many worlds randomly and then inspire the creation of beings able to do the work of improving them rather than to deadlift it all with pure direct miracles. We were created for the purpose of magnifying God's lazy signals into mighty deeds. The mighty deeds we are to accomplish are mostly concerned with the future creation of even more sensitive and powerful doers of deeds operating on ever greater scales.

## **3. What We Should Do**

### **a. Concerning Prayer, Divination, and Messengers.**

*God speaks to us through the world and we speak to God through our actions.* It isn't so much that God communicates as that God manipulates chance events to produce results.

Nevertheless, we can see life as a dialogue with God, in which God speaks to us through the world we encounter (sometimes through miraculous or semi-miraculous signs and portents but mostly through everyday life) and in which we speak to God through the actions we take (sometimes through vows and resolutions that change the future, but mostly just by being ourselves).

*Liberality serves God.* We should understand that for the most part we, and others, are already where God wants us, doing what God needs us to do. But probabilities constantly change as the omniverse grows, so adjustments do need to be made. We can usually just take actions based on a general understanding of God's will and obvious factors of cause and effect. You are just playing your role by being yourself, but so am I by being myself. Even if that brings us into conflict, we are moving parts of a single machine serving God through the actual results of our interaction. But as a guideline, we know God wants a thriving human civilization, so we should personally refrain from doing things that make conditions worse while choosing to devote ourselves to living productive lives in cooperation with those around us. But sometimes we need to take individual guidance for special assignments due to individual characteristics or positioning.

*There's a science to reading signal from God.* In general, it's less efficient to arrange improbable events for large audiences than for smaller ones, since each individual's optimal response differs and thus each individual needs more unique guidance. Different signals for each are impossible when all receive the same signal. So you should usually do your divination alone. Nevertheless, we can share notes about generalities. For instance, I think of myself as a theologian rather than a prophet. I'm not carrying a message from God, I'm just somebody who figured it out. God doesn't necessarily want everyone to know (what I believe will ultimately be recognized as) the truth, just to be productive, and you can be productive while totally misunderstanding reality. But the truth should be available for those for whom it is appropriate, so I believe there is some value to what I am doing here.

*To read God's signal to you in random events, you have to understand the constraints.* You can assign what meaning you will take from certain kinds of future random events, how you will respond. For God, it's most efficient to speak through places of highly complex and chaotic events, connected broadly to other chaotic environments. It's less efficient to speak through constrained situations containing limited avenues for chance impacts to be arranged. Signal just carries better in a busy crowd, but not necessarily to the whole crowd. However each individual takes meaning from events, we each get utilized for carrying God's messages to other people. All the world's a stage, and all the people players. Often you are used to carry instructions to someone else, but you shouldn't read too much into it and try to figure out what message you are supposed to be carrying and tell the recipient what it means. Let God handle that. Just be the conduit. You are just the paper on which the message is written. The target audience knows best how to read it.

#### ***b. Concerning Ethics, Morality, and Democracy.***

*Only God knows full consequences.* All ethical systems boil down to consequentialism because whatever a system values is really a kind of consequence. But only God knows full consequences of everything, so only God can practice consequentialism directly. Humans can only be sure they are behaving rightly to the extent they are guided by God.

*Instructions come many ways.* Giving us each perfect and detailed individualized instructions would be inefficient, but giving us all identical group instructions in every case would also be wasteful. So God carries part of the signal to the many through the many over long periods of time. Peoples evolve social contracts and traditions and cultures that are appropriate for their roles and purposes in the service of God's plans. Then, in addition, God qualifies special details to smaller groups and individuals. These multiple layers of signal combine to perfection.

*Get along and be ambitious.* As a rule we should respect the true social contract that applies where we find ourselves, especially if it consults the whole population. Yet those who understand Omnireism know a higher truth, the purpose behind it all, and thus we have both greater opportunity and greater duty. We can think about the ultimate purpose of our actions and we can understand our individual missions that may transcend the minimum requirements of our environment.

*Don't do as the locals don't do.* Wherever you find yourself, you have an ethical duty (since local norms are mandates from God) to never disobey a prohibition of the true social contract. The true social contract is what people actually go by, as opposed to what they say to go by. If it says

don't do something, don't do it on your own. Your own conscience, inspiration from God, can however give you permission to refuse mandates of the social contract. You always have an ethical right to choose inaction.

*Collective inspiration can authorize rebellion.* Sometimes God condones violation of prohibitions in the social contract. But how do you know your instincts are really inspiration from God and not just self delusion? You consult a larger social grouping that shares your fundamental religious beliefs. An Omnireist congregation can authorize collective rejection of local prohibitions by its members. This earns ethical cover, but you can still go to jail.

### **c. Concerning Purpose and Impact.**

*What's in it for me?* God arranges events to tend to empower those who have the potential to act productively if so empowered. The best way to have such potential is to devote yourself to serving God. Scratch God's back and have faith that God will scratch yours.

*We exist to serve, not to be served.* Behaving ethically is a way to avoid doing wrong, or a way to do our duty when we have exceptional opportunity that God wants us to act on. But we need to be able to think about larger vision and what kinds of goals we can set without having to get special divine guidance. The less work we require God to do, the better. That's why we should not pray for boons, even selfless ones. Do your best all the time and let God do what God will do.

*How do your plans help humanity conquer the universe?* We should seek to serve, but how do we think about how to set goals? We can't know our total impact on the entire future of the omniverse. We have to apply principles to our understanding of reality. Understanding that God uses leverage to increase leverage, we can conclude that God wants human civilization to be sensitive to God and effective at producing results. But really what matters is intelligent beings, not necessarily biological humans from Earth. As we spread our growing civilization throughout the universe, aliens and robots will take their places with us in serving God.

*What does this mean for me?* Your place in God's plans is something you learn from experience. Participation in organized Omnireism can help. But your role is also something you can influence. You can increase your value to God by getting more capable and more devoted, and you are advised to do just that.

## **4. Further Guidance**

This extended summary expands upon the statement of faith, and may answer many questions and suggest avenues of thought, but is not an exhaustive treatise of all the implications. I suggest that others may expound further, but also offer earlier contributions to the development of Omnireist thought. The book, "All Must Be," by Roy Neary inspired me and you might also find it useful. Techno-progressives and many worlds theorists were also formative.

# **Organized Omnireism**

## **A. Introduction**

*Band together.* I invite those persuaded of the truth of the Omnireist Statement of Faith to band together to practice Omnireism as a lightly organized religion. My proposal is that we form small groups that meet regularly to share how we are practicing life as Omnireists and to critique and encourage each other. Further, I offer a system whereby such small groups can voluntarily form hierarchical organizations capable of guiding smaller groups and organizing more ambitious endeavours.

*Immutable code.* I've thought this out and I believe the best thing is to prevent conflict, corruption, and wheel reinvention by providing a fully formed system that may not be deviated from. In the design I have provided plenty of opportunity to innovate and do things different ways, but that will only be robust enough to survive if the core system itself cannot be tampered with. Under a good constitution, you can vote for any law you want but you can't vote away the democracy that lets you vote for any law you want.

*Franchise Model.* This system is entirely a franchise model. I provide rules to follow in creating, growing, and running your own congregation, but propose no system of central, top down, management over and above congregations.

## **B. Forming a Congregation**

*Statement of Faith.* First, each individual becomes an Omnireist by concurring with the Statement of Faith. We have a creed, get over it. You could of course use a system modeled on the Rules for Omnireist Congregations without ascribing to the Statement of Faith, but then it would be something different. The purpose of congregations is to have confession and revelation meetings—the rest of the governance stuff is just to support that. And the function of confession and revelation meetings is to share perspectives on a commonly held belief and its implications in each other’s lives. You can’t do that together without a commonly held belief to use as a lens for focus of reasoning. Sentiments and rituals won’t do it.

*Three Meet.* Second, find or convert two more people. Now you have a list of three Omnireists and you can form a congregation. Use the following rules and convene an impromptu governance meeting. Make participation fulfilling and your congregation will grow, promoting Omnireism and thereby serving God.

*Grow Carefully.* While congregations primarily exist to facilitate “supplemental meetings,” those meetings may lead to larger or smaller collective goals that require larger scale cooperation. That’s part of why there’s an organization. Another part of its function is to standardize the brand, to ensure fellowships don’t stray too far from the intent of “the Omnireist movement” generally. But don’t let the institution become a purpose in itself. Hesitate to let your congregations hold assets, have employees, and seek government recognition. You can circle together in free places using portable chairs. Have extra seating and copies of this manifesto handy.

## **C. Rules for Omnireist Congregations**

1. A *congregation* is an independent Omnireist organization. A congregation is founded when the convening of an impromptu meeting names its initial members, but can also be split off from a larger congregation or be formed by merger of several smaller ones.
2. A *member* of a congregation is an individual who has been inducted into it or convened into the congregation at its founding. Elements of congregations also have members, who must also be members of the congregation.
3. A *council* is a group of members who meet regularly to make collective decisions for part or all of a congregation. Councils within a congregation can be organized hierarchically, with superior, peer, and subordinate relationships between different councils.
4. A *high council* is a council that governs an entire congregation.
5. A *sector* is a council and all its subordinate councils.
6. The *governing council* of a sector is the council that governs an entire sector.
7. A *fellowship* is a sector consisting of one council with no subordinate councils.
8. A *chapter* is a sector whose governing council has no subordinate councils other than fellowships.
9. An *order* is a sector whose governing council has subordinate chapters but no subordinate orders.
10. A *federation* is a sector whose governing council has subordinate orders but no subordinate federations.
11. A *level* is all sectors within a congregation that have the same number of layers of subordinate councils. All fellowships in a congregation are on the same level, all chapters are on the same level, all orders are on the same level, and so forth. No level above federation is defined here, but presumably they can be organized by extension of these rules.
12. The *scale* of a congregation is the number of levels it has, or put another way it is the kind of sector the high council governs. A fellowship scale congregation consists just of one fellowship, whereas a federation scale congregation is made up of multiple orders, which are each made up of multiple chapters, which are each made up of multiple fellowships, which each have multiple members.
13. The *list*, or *member list*, of a council is an ordered list of all the members of that council. It can be written down or it can just exist in people’s minds. Every list of names is potentially the member list of a council. Other than the leader, a council can arrange the sequence of its member list however it likes (by resolution).

14. The *leader* of a council is the member whose name appears first on the member list of the council. The leader of a high council is selected by the council, but the leaders of all subordinate councils are appointed by the leaders of immediately superior councils (by pronouncement). Leaders may designate half or less of the members of the led council as too junior to serve as representative (by pronouncement).
15. The *representative* of a council is the member whose name appears second on the member list of the council. The representative of any council is selected (by resolution rearranging the member list) by the council from among the more senior members of the council (as determined by its leader).
16. A sector may *disband* by decision of its governing council or by automatic processes as defined here. When a sector above fellowship level disbands, the sectors of all its directly subordinate councils become independent congregations.
17. *Voting members* are members of a council who have the right to vote. Every council can vote to give or take voting rights from any of its members other than those who are members by virtue of appointment as leaders. The appointed leader of a council is always a voting member of it, and leaders of subordinate councils are never voting members of the immediately superior council. Representatives of councils with fewer than ten voting members cannot be voting members of the immediately superior council. Any sector whose governing council has fewer than five voting members automatically disbands. Denial of voting rights is not to be done lightly.
18. *Induction* is admission to voting membership in an existing council other than ex officio or by appointment as a leader. Fellowships can induct members by voting them in (by resolution). The leader is a member by appointment rather than induction. Inductions of members of other fellowships are not valid. Councils above the fellowship level consist only of their own appointed leader plus, ex officio, the leaders and representatives of all immediately subordinate councils. Leaders of immediately subordinate councils are always non voting members of the immediately superior council. Representatives of immediately subordinate councils are voting members of the immediately superior council by default, unless the council has deprived them of voting rights or unless the council they represent has fewer than ten voting members.
19. *Regular governance meetings* are meetings of a council which must be held once and only once at some point during each of certain regular intervals of time, depending on the level of the council. Fellowships must have a regular governance meeting during each week, chapters must have a regular governance meeting during each month, orders must have a regular governance meeting during each quarter of the year, federations must have a regular governance meeting during each year, and any levels above federation must have a regular governance meeting every February 29<sup>th</sup>. Regular governance meetings commence at a time and place determined at a previous meeting of the council, but if no valid time or place has been set then they will commence at the same time and place (within the time period) as the most recent governance meeting of that council before the period. Regular governance meetings start on time whether or not any members are present at the designated place and end either by decision of the council or when no member is present.
20. *Expulsion* is removal from membership in a fellowship. A fellowship may vote to expel any member other than its appointed leader. Also, any member of a fellowship (other than the leader) is automatically expelled after failing to appear at any point during two successive regular governance meetings. Omnireist congregations will not be paper tigers of people who never show up.
21. *Annexation* is admission of a smaller scale congregation as a sector of a larger scale congregation. The annexed congregation ceases to exist as a congregation. The leaders of the two congregations can cause the annexation to occur without approval of either high council (by pronouncement). The leader of the larger congregation designates where the new sector will go in the sector structure.
22. *Merger* is formation of a new larger scale congregation from three or more congregations that are one level smaller in scale. The leaders of the congregations of the same scale can write a new member list and convene an impromptu governance meeting and simply agree to a merger without the need for high council permission,. They become the high council of the new congregation.
23. A *pronouncement* is a special action taken by a leader or representative during a governance meeting as authorized here. Like resolutions, pronouncements take effect at the end of the meeting.

24. *Fission* is division of a sector into two sectors. If a sector council has 16 or more voting members, either the representative or leader can make a pronouncement creating a fission. At that time the first six odd numbered voting members of the council (1,3,5,7,9, and 11), and their sectors, become part of a new sector that is on the same level as the sector being fissioned. All other members, and their sectors, remain as they were, a continuation of the existing council and sector. The former representative of the fissioning sector will be the new leader of the original sector until a new leader is appointed. Initially, the newer sector's council does not inherit the standing resolutions of the council from which it was fissioned, though it may adopt them anew.
25. *Impromptu governance meetings* can be convened whenever a majority of voting members of a council are within five meters of the member who convenes the meeting by saying, "I convene this council" and names the name of the council. Impromptu governance meetings continue until a majority of voting members are no longer within five meters of the convener.
26. *Governance meetings* are the only council meetings that can make formal decisions of the council. Only two types exist: regular governance meetings and impromptu governance meetings.
27. The *speaker* is the one member of a council whose speech is official at a particular time.
28. *Standing* is, by default, assuming a vertical bodily posture in a gravity field, as opposed to being horizontal (recumbent or prone) or seated. A council can decide (for itself or its entire sector) to define standing using some other signal, such as turning on a light or raising a small flag.
29. *Raising a hand* is, by default, raising the end of an upper appendage above the head (the normally highest point) relative to the local gravity field. A council can decide (for itself or its entire sector) to define hand raising using some other signal, such as turning on a light or raising a small flag.
30. A *turn* is a period of time when one specific council member has the status of speaker. A turn ends when a majority of voting members present is standing or raising hands to vote on a proposal or when the speaker says "remarks complete." At the end of a turn the next member's turn begins once a majority of voting members present are not standing. Members who are not present or entitled to vote get turns (and subturns) also.
31. A *cycle* is a series of turns during which every member of a council gets exactly one turn as speaker. During a cycle the status of speaker first goes to the leader and then proceeds to each other member in order of appearance on the member list. During a governance meeting, cycles continue indefinitely as long as the meeting continues, turns proceeding from the last on the list at the end of a cycle back to the leader to start the next cycle, after any non members who are also afforded turns. All members get turns whether they are voting members or non-voting. By resolution, even non members can be given turns at the end of each cycle, ideally following recital of the statement of faith.
32. A *resolution proposal*, or just *proposal*, is a specific kind of statement made by the speaker during a governance meeting. To make a resolution proposal the speaker says, "I propose the following resolution" followed by the words of the proposed resolution, followed by the words "vote now." Only voting members may validly make resolution proposals.
33. A *resolution* is a decision of a council. After a resolution is proposed there is a one minute period during which voting members may vote. If, at any point during that minute, a majority of voting members present has hands raised simultaneously then the text of the resolution proposal is adopted as a resolution of the council. However, no resolution takes effect until the end of the meeting during which it is adopted. Further, resolutions adopted at impromptu meetings expire at the end of the next regular governance meeting. Resolutions adopted later supercede and abrogate conflicting elements of resolutions adopted earlier by the same council. By default, all resolutions apply to all sectors subordinate to the resolving council unless a higher or later resolution changes that. Higher is more important than later unless a higher council has said otherwise.
34. *Annihilation* is mandated disbandment of a sector. By pronouncement, a congregation leader can declare any subordinate sector disbanded.
35. A *subcycle* is a cycle of *subturns* that occurs between speaker turns during a non-governance meeting.
36. A *supplemental meeting* is a specially defined kind of non-governance meeting that commences immediately following a regular governance meeting at the same location as the preceding meeting.

A supplemental meeting operates like a governance meeting, except that there are no resolutions or voting. Instead, each speaker's turn follows subcycles of questions and answers. During each subcycle, the speaker gets an initial subturn, then each member on the list gets a subturn to ask the preceding speaker a question, and following each such question the speaker gets a subturn to answer the question. A subturn is ended by the questioner or speaker saying "that's all," by end of the turn, or by a majority of voting members present raising a hand at one time. Subcycles continue until the turn is immediately ended by the speaker saying "remarks complete" or by a majority of voting members present standing up at one time. There are three kinds of supplemental meetings: confession, revelation, and drafting meetings.

37. A *confession meeting* is a supplemental meeting following the first and third regular governance meetings of a fellowship during a month. The purpose of a confession meeting is for each speaker to share goals, plans, and progress in serving God in life and to receive feedback on that from the council. Councils above fellowship level can schedule confession meetings by special resolution.

38. A *revelation meeting* is a supplemental meeting following the second regular governance meeting of a fellowship during a month. The purpose of a revelation meeting is for the speaker to share miraculous experiences, epiphanies, or just ideas and to receive feedback on that from the council. Councils above fellowship level can schedule revelation meetings by special resolution.

39. A *drafting meeting* is a supplemental meeting following the fourth regular governance meeting of a fellowship during a month and following all regular governance meetings above fellowship level except when a special confession or revelation meeting has been scheduled. The purpose of a drafting meeting is for drafting of resolutions and solicitation of support for them. Such resolutions are not voted on at the drafting meeting, but since governance meetings offer no opportunity for debate or amendment there needs to be provision for such activities.

40. The *record* is a document listing all resolutions and pronouncements ever made in the history of a council. Until a council assigns a recorder and gives guidance, every member takes notes and creates a record. Similarly, rules are enforced by informal action of the members, though perhaps an officiant could be appointed formally. Leaders and representatives aren't necessarily officiants or recorders, they just have the roles defined here. The rules are the rules.

41. A *charter rule* is a rule that can only be created or changed by unanimous consent of an entire congregation. The high council proposes it and every fellowship votes on it and reports whether there were any votes against it. These reports filter up through the hierarchy, and if a single member votes against the change of charter rule then the rule change doesn't happen. Needless to say, charter rules are easier to make when a congregation is small. This set of rules is presumed to be a collection of charter rules of all congregations. Presumably everyone who joins a congregation, by joining one of its fellowships, consents to them.

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