
CHARTER

ON THE ORGANISATION

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF EVANGELICALS LEUVEN

(ICEL VZW)

1 Identity ICEL

ICEL is an independent, evangelical church, who identifies as followers of Christ. Our language of communication is English. We are truly international and come from many different churches and denominations. As such it is without borders, with the motto: "all colours, no fences."

2 Our Vision

Through our activities show the love and grace of Christ and transform the lives of all of the international and the local community in Leuven and beyond.

3 Our Mission

To teach and preach the gospel and in particular to serve the international community of Leuven with the opportunity for worship, Bible based teaching, fellowship and support, and help share the love of Christ beyond the borders of our church.

4 What we believe

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of faith that dates back to the very early church. It was written not long after the books of the New Testament. Christians throughout the centuries have used it to explain and remember our core beliefs and we also make it our Statement of Faith:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal) Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

5 Code of Conduct

5.1 Preamble

People coming to ICEL are from many different cultures, countries and backgrounds. Church-wise they come from different denominations, or have no church background at all. Most will call themselves Christians, others are searching. ICEL aspires to be an inclusive church, sharing God's love and grace to all who visit the worship service and the other church events. It wants to be open minded, generous, encouraging, hospitable and focus on what unites. The Code of Conduct should reflect these principles.

5.2 Guidelines

First of all we believe that the Bible is God's Word and the authoritative guide for our lives. As for this Code of Conduct some key Bible passages have been chosen, to indicate the core values and moral code of ICEL.

The following passages highlight that it is the love of God, poured into our hearts, which gives us unity of Spirit through His giftings. Members of ICEL agree to use these passages of the Bible as guideline for their daily and church life:

1 Corinthians 12:12 – 18 (NIV© 2011)

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

¹³ For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

1 Corinthians 13:1 – 7 (NIV© 2011)

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

⁵ It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Galatians 5: 22 – 26 (NIV© 2011)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

6 Membership

Since 2013 ICEL is an official non-profit organisation according to Belgian law: ICEL vzw, and has in consequence both 'ordinary' members (with voting right in the General Assembly) and 'guest' members (without voting right). In order to function properly the vzw needs registered, 'ordinary' members. This 'ordinary' membership is obtained by application and endorsement of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is formed by all the registered, 'ordinary' members. All members, both 'ordinary' and 'guest' members, have every right to fully participate in the mission and vision of ICEL.

In the remainder of this document the term 'member' refers to 'ordinary member', unless explicitly mentioned otherwise.

6.1 Conditions

People who come regularly to ICEL and participate or would like to participate in its various activities, are encouraged to become a member of ICEL vzw. Those who want to become a member of ICEL vzw:

1. Agree with the vision and mission of ICEL
2. Agree with the statement of what we believe
3. Agree with the Code of Conduct and the statutes
4. Contribute to the vision and mission of ICEL through voluntary activities and financial support according to their ability

6.2 Procedure

People who want to become a member shall fill out the ICEL member application form and give this to one of the board members. With this application, candidates declare that they agree with the above-mentioned conditions.

The board will then consider the application and will only contact the candidate in case there are questions or concerns. If there are no concerns, the application is considered to have been accepted by the board, who will then request a formal endorsement by the General Assembly.

6.3 Rights of a member

1. A member of ICEL has the right to attend the General Assembly, the highest institution of ICEL, and to cast her/his vote.
2. An extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly can take place if at least 20% of the members support this initiative (article 17 of the statutes)

These and other rights are described in the statutes of ICEL vzw.

6.4 Purpose of membership

6.4.1 To the Individual

1. Membership implies that a member will faithfully and according to ability commit him/herself with his/her talents to the objectives of ICEL
2. Members will be expected to take to heart the material and financial needs of the church. By having a stable income it will be possible for ICEL to make longer term internal and external commitments such as costs for a building, a salary for a pastoral worker/pastor and support of missionaries or projects.

6.4.2 To the board

1. The Board needs a clear mandate given by the General Assembly
2. The Board will be accountable to the General Assembly

6.4.3 To the Church

1. Having a functional General Assembly and Board is a legal requirement for a Non-Profit Organisation (VZW) in Belgium.

2. Once the General Assembly and the Board function well, transparency will be assured

6.5 Termination of membership

- Members can terminate their membership at any time, by informing the board.
- Membership will also be terminated if members no longer take part in any of the activities of ICEL for a period of 12 months
- Members not complying with the Code of Conduct of ICEL will be contacted by a board member to discuss the issue. If the situation does not improve, membership may be terminated in accordance with the procedure as described under the founding articles 13 and 20 of the VZW.

7 The Board

7.1 Mandate

The mandate of the board is described in the founding articles of ICEL vzw. The board is legally required for non-profit organisations in Belgium. The board has the right and responsibility to lead ICEL and represent the organisation towards third parties. It has the power to employ people, sign documents, manage the finances, purchase goods, etc. The board is accountable to the General Assembly.

7.2 Responsibilities of the Board

The board has the following responsibilities:

1. Being an example to the church in word and deed
2. Giving leadership to the church
3. Being responsible for the preaching and the teaching
4. Organising activities and support initiatives that will lead to spiritual growth of individuals and the entire church
5. Being responsible for financial management
6. Being responsible for pastoral care
7. Being responsible for projects, mission and evangelism
8. Being responsible for diaconal work
9. Being responsible for all other tasks that are delegated to other members in leadership in the church
10. Any other action that needs to be taken to assure the well-being of ICEL, its entire congregation and guests

7.3 Functioning of the Board

The board assures the daily functioning of the church. The board meets about 10 times a year.

The board may only take decisions when a majority of the board members are present or represented. Decisions may only be taken if two-third of the board members support the decision. Where there is a deadlock or serious disagreement, the decision will be postponed to the next meeting. The time in between will be used for reflection or further research. If the deadlock remains the chairman has a casting vote. The secretary will keep a record of board members' votes.

For more details of the functioning of the board see the founding articles (Statutes).

7.4 Tasks

Tasks of the chairman, the secretary and the treasurer shall include:

7.4.1 Chairman

1. Provides leadership by being an effective strategist and a good networker.
2. Ensures that the board is functioning properly:
 - a. Ensures that each meeting is planned and conducted properly and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.
 - b. Makes the most of all his/her fellow board members, building and leading the team
 - c. Arranges regular evaluations of the functioning of the board
3. Ensures that the organisation is managed effectively by having appropriate policies and procedures in place
4. Provides support and supervision to the rest of the team
5. Represents the organisation as its figurehead and as the legal representative

7.4.2 Secretary

1. Takes responsibility for the member administration and correspondence
2. Takes the minutes of the general assemblies and the board meetings
3. Sends agendas for meetings
4. Makes sure that the legal duties are fulfilled according to the guidelines of the authorities

7.4.3 Treasurer

1. Manages the finances
2. Is responsible for the bookkeeping and regular reporting
3. Makes the annual financial report to the general assembly
4. Is responsible for making a draft budget
5. Ensures that payments are made in line with the mandate that she/he has received from the board and in accordance with the approved budget.

7.5 Election of board members

7.5.1 Conditions

Candidates should have been a member of ICEL for at least one year. Partners or close family cannot be in the board at the same time.

Candidates should comply with the conditions as described in **1 Timothy 3:1 – 7 (NIV© 2011)**:

¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

7.5.2 Procedure

1. The secretary sends an email to all members of ICEL inviting them to suggest (“nominate”) candidates for new board members, emphasizing the importance of prayer in this process. Simultaneously this message will be brought to the congregation during several Sunday services. They nominate as many persons as needed for the board; when two members are needed they can nominate two, when three members are needed they can nominate three, etc. Members have three weeks to nominate new members. The secretary should clearly indicate the closing date as well as describe the full procedure for selecting board members.

ICEL does not discriminate with regards to gender, nationality or age.

When searching for Board member candidates we consider: availability (is this person willing to be a candidate, will she/he stay long enough, will he/she have enough time to fill this role), reputation (what we know of this person; if too little, the board may ask for references), gifts, skills and more.

2. The secretary makes a list of all the nominees in decreasing order of the number of nominations received.

3. The board selects a shortlist from the people with most nominations while considering the qualities needed in the board.

4. Nominees from the shortlist will be asked whether they are willing to be a candidate.

5. A member of the board together with the pastoral worker (or another board member) will have an interview with each potential candidate based on a list of questions.

6. Based on the outcome of the interviews the board will decide whether to accept the candidacy of those interviewed. If not, the next person or persons on the shortlist (see point 3.) will be approached, until there is an approved list of candidates equal to the number needed on the board.

7. Once the list of chosen candidates is ready, the secretary will send a message to the members of ICEL to introduce them. This message should be sent at least four weeks before the next General Assembly and will include: A. a summary of the interview with the candidate (maximum one A4 page) and B. an explanation of the further process.

Members who have a serious problem with this candidate (e.g., bad behaviour, sinful life) should contact the chairman or the pastoral worker within two weeks.

8. Nominees who were not selected will not be informed.

9. The General Assembly will vote to accept or not accept each candidate. When a candidate gets two-thirds of the votes of people present at the General Assembly, her or his candidacy is confirmed.

10. The votes will be counted by the secretary with the help of or in presence of at least one volunteer member from the General Assembly who is neither a Board member nor a candidate-Board member.

11. The candidates will be blessed by the church preferably within one month of their election.

7.6 Duration

Board members are elected for a period of 4 years, after which a re-election is possible. Board members may serve a maximum of 8 years after which a break of two years is obligatory. Exceptions are allowed if the continuity of the board is endangered. The board should strive for a smooth and balanced handover of responsibilities. Board members who wish to step down voluntarily can do so by writing a letter of resignation to the other board members. The mandate of a board member may be terminated at any time if 3/4 of the General Assembly supports the proposal.

8 Pastor and Pastoral Worker(s)

The profile and job description of the Pastor and/or pastoral worker(s) will be decided by the Board. The Board will also lead the selection procedure. Once one or more suitable candidates have been selected, the General Assembly will take the final decision.

The pastor or pastoral worker will report to the board. He/she will take part of all board meetings, but will not have the right to vote. He/she will not take part in board meetings where decisions are made that relate to his or her person.

9 Changes in the Charter

Changes of the Charter can only take place with a 3/4 majority of the General Assembly. The invitation for that meeting should include a copy of the suggested change(s).

In cases not covered by this Charter, the Board shall decide.

Leuven, December 17th 2017.

Revision history	Date	Comments
1.0	5 October 2016	First version. Approved in General Assembly
1.1	6 December 2017	Detailed elaboration of the procedure for selection of board members (paragraph 7.e Procedure). Proposed to the General Assembly on 17 December 2017
2.0	17 December 2017	Amended version of the proposed version 1.1, as discussed, concluded and agreed (by vote) by the General Assembly on 17 December 2017.