

## NORTH FAMILY COVENANT.

Altho it cannot be denied that every truly honest and faithful Believer has the law of Christ written in his heart, which is more binding upon him than any written laws or covenants that can be formed yet, as he well knows the subtle wiles of the adversary, and is unconscious who will persevere to the end and who will not, he is at all times ready and willing to unite with his brethren and sisters in any just and lawful measure which is calculated to secure the rights and privileges of the Society against the depredations of the wicked, and no Believer will ever violate his solemn covenant which he has made with his brethren and sisters (the) for their mutual benefit, unless he first violates the law of Christ in his own soul, and keeps his wickedness concealed. Whenever he does this, he loses his justification and protection; and then there is no temptation to which he is not exposed to yield, nor any wickedness into which he is not liable to fall. Having first sinned against God and his own soul, he is then prepared to go any length in sinning against his brethren and sisters, in violating his solemn engagements with them, and injuring them in their property, rights and privileges. Hence it is as necessary for Believers to guard against apostasies as against any class of wicked people whatever, and many times much more so; and hence, a written Covenant, with every possible guard, is essentially necessary, in order to secure the consecrated property of Believers from all unjust claims whatever.

As this Covenant respects the order of Young Believers in a gathering family, whatever of temporal property is brought in and devoted by the members thereof, it must be done in a manner adapted to the situation and circumstances of the junior members belonging to that order. It ought to be considered and borne in mind that young Believers are not always prepared to devote their property to the use of the Society: they may have debts to pay, or filial heirs to provide for. But even admitting that they owe nothing and have no children who are dependent upon and entitled to a portion of their property; yet for the want of a well-established faith, or not having had a sufficient time to prove their faith, or to settle their confidence in the principles of the Society or not having sufficiently counted the cost of sacrificing all for Christ's sake and the gospel's, they may not be fully prepared to do it. Therefore these matters should be well considered beforehand, lest they attempt so important an undertaking without a full and settled conviction in their own minds of its essential benefit to their christian travel, and its importance to their happiness and well-being. Those who have fairly tried the experiment know for themselves the truth of Christ's words, "Whosoever be he of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple." But young Believers, at their first setting out do not possess an undoubted knowledge of this principle; nor are they always willing to trust in the testimony of those who do possess it; and they must act freely in this as in all other matters; for the gospel does not constrain souls to act against their own faith and free choice.

The following Covenant is founded upon the most free and liberal principles, and is perfectly consistent with those principles which have been acknowledged and practiced from the first gathering and establishment of the Church in this Society; principles which are perfectly consistent with the nature of the gospel and the social relation and union of Believers; and, as far as they extend, they embrace the only true plan of a consecrated and united interest which can be devised for the mutual happiness and benefit of all concerned. Therefore it is presumed that this Covenant will meet the approbation of all who have a proper understanding of its provisions, and are able to appreciate its benefits.

It is to be understood that all persons, by conforming to the general faith and principles of the Society, may enjoy a spiritual connection and general union with the members thereof, without devoting any part of their temporal property or labor to the use of the society. It must also be considered and understood, that, altho the Covenant makes no provision for hiring any members of the family; yet it gives to each individual the liberty to enjoy a social relation in the united order of a family, without devoting any more of his or her property than is agreeable to his or her own free and voluntary choice; consequently none are required to enter into any state or situation in the Society beyond the limits of their own faith and free choice; and this every rational being has a right to do. Hence no one can reasonably complain of a want of freedom in the provisions, benefits and privileges of the institution.

Reason and experience have fully proved that an association in a united capacity, affords the means of enjoying social benefits and happiness far what can be afforded in an individual capacity; because, whomever there is a unity of feeling, interest and action, every individual talent is exercised for the good of all; and thereby the talents of all become beneficial to each individual. ~~The subscribers~~

The subscribers of this covenant, having received faith in the testimony of Christ's second appearing, according to the principles and practice of the United Society called Shakers, have, agreeable to their own faith and voluntary choice, been gathered into the family known by the name and title of THE NORTH FAMILY, or central institution of the order of YOUNG BELIEVERS, and have become members thereof. This family and institution have long been established under the care and ministration of different Elders, who, from time to time, were appointed by the Ministry of said Society, and are, at present, under the care and ministration of CALVIN GREEN and RICHARD BUSHNELL.

The principle of the Covenant having been taught from the beginning, and the well known and established faith and order of government having been sufficiently explained and understood, a written Covenant was formed and executed in October, 1820, by the members who, at that time, ~~belonged to the~~ belonged to the family. Since that period many changes have taken place and many new members have been added. These and other circumstances have rendered it expedient to renew the Covenant. And as it is a matter of importance that the provisions and requirements of our social compact should be clearly and explicitly understood by all, it is agreed that the written form thereof be amended according to the aforesaid principles, and in such a manner as to render it conformable to present circumstances, and agreeable to our present light and understanding. It is therefore amended as follows:

ARTICLES OF THE COVENANT.

Preamble,

We, the brethren and sisters of the United Society of Believers, (commonly called Shakers) being, in our united capacity, a branch of said Society, in the town of New Lebanon, County of Columbia and State of New York, and being gathered into a family by the name and title of THE NORTH FAMILY, or central institution of the order of Young Believers, in said Society, now under the care and ministration of Calvin Green and Richard Bushnell, Elizabeth Hastings ~~and~~ Sally Bushnell, and considering the importance of the benefits to be derived from a covenant relation in the gospel, according to the established institutions of said Society, do hereby consent and enter into the following

DO hereby accept and enter into the following ARTICLES of agreement, which we promise to keep and maintain, both in our collective and individual capacities, as an abiding Covenant & Constitution.

ARTICLE I.

Declaration and Choice of the Subscribers.

We do hereby solemnly declare, in the presence of each other, and before all men, that the principles of this government Covenant are agreeable to the faith and understanding which we have received from the beginning of our acquaintance and connection with this Society; and that they are perfectly consistent with our understanding of the gospel of Christ, and essential to that social relation which ought to exist among rational and intelligent beings, and which, we believe, was designed, from the beginning, to promote the happiness of human society. And we also declare, that we have not been induced by any flattery, fear or compulsion of man to subscribe our names to this Covenant; but by our own free and voluntary choice, and for our own benefit; desiring also that our will and intentions may hereby be fully made known and declared to all whom it may concern, and especially to those who might otherwise claim the right of heirship from us.

ARTICLE III. (for ARTICLE II SEE Below.)

Institution, Powers and Duties of the Trustees.

We also covenant and agree, that, in conformity with the order and practice of the United Society, Deacons or Trustees are, and shall be appointed by the authority aforesaid, to act as stewards of the temporalities of this family. And it shall be the duty of said Deacons and Trustees, and their successors in office and trust, to take the general charge and oversight of the consecrated property and interest of said family; to superintend the temporal business and concerns thereof; to improve, use and appropriate the same, together with the profits thereof, and the avails of the labor performed therein, as circumstances may require, for the use, benefit and increase of said family, and for such other religious and charitable purposes as the gospel may require. And it shall also be the duty of the said Deacons or Trustees, in all their transactions respecting the interests and concerns of said family, to be faithful in their trust, to keep a strict union with their Elders, and to counsel and advise with them; and in all matters to be governed by the principles of the gospel known and practiced in the Society; so that, in all things, the duties of their trust shall be performed for the objects and purposes specified and declared by this Covenant, and for no other object or purpose whatever; and no transaction of any Trustee, in the use and disposal of any of the real estate of the family, nor any important contract, shall be considered as valid without the knowledge & consent of their Elders.

ARTICLE II.

PRINCIPLES AND ORDER OF GOVERNMENT.

We further declare before God and all men, that we acknowledge our full and conscientious belief in the faith and principles of the gospel, as taught by the first founders of this Society, and now established in the Church of our community, as the true principles which constitute the foundation of our Christian relation, order and government, and by which all the members of this Society ought to be led, governed and directed; and we believe that in the unity of these principles and this order, we may enjoy a true union with the Divine Creator, and a just and social relation with each other: And we also declare, that the sole intent of our uniting together in a family capacity, as a branch of the Society aforesaid, is for the express purpose of enjoying this sacred union and relation. AND WE HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE, that the Ministry, who are established and maintained in the Church of this Society, are the executive and first visible leading authority of this Society and the center of influence to all its branches.

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That the power of appointing Elders, or burden-bearers in any capacity to act as the leading authority of this family and order, is vested in the said Ministry; that the right of appointment to offices of care and trust in this family, appertains to the Elders thereof, in union with, and by the counsel and advice of the said Ministry; and that such appointments, being officially communicated to all concerned, and receiving the general approbation of the family, are to be confirmed and supported therein until altered by the authority aforesaid.

#### ARTICLE IV.

##### Dedication of Property Optional.

We further covenant and agree, that each and every member of the said North Family, according to the established custom of this Institution, shall be at liberty to bring in his or her property, and, at his or her own option, to dedicate and devote a part or the whole of said property, according to the principles aforesaid, to the use and benefit of said family and Society forever: And the property so dedicated and devoted, shall be received and holden by the Trustees aforesaid, and by their successors in office and trust, in their official capacity, in the manner and for the purposes specified in this Covenant: Then, and in such case, the property so dedicated, shall be considered as forever consecrated to the uses and purposes aforesaid, and shall never thereafter, under any pretence whatever, be reclaimed by the former owner: - PROVIDED NEVERTHELESS, That no person shall be permitted to dedicate the whole of his or her property, as aforesaid, until all his or her just debts, and all just and equitable rights and demands of his or her creditors and filial heirs shall be justly and honestly provided for or discharged, so as to leave the dedicator free from all pecuniary embarrassments.

#### ARTICLE V.

##### Concerning Inventories and Dedicated Property.

In order to prevent doubts and disputes respecting the property which may be brought in by those who unite themselves to the said NORTH Family, it is FURTHER COVENANTED & AGREED, - That such articles of property, the use only of which is intended to be devoted to the family or Society, shall be appraised by mutual agreement between the owners and Trustees, and an Inventory thereof shall be taken, a copy of which, signed and acknowledged by the owner, shall be delivered to the Trustees, and another copy, signed and acknowledged by the Trustees, shall be delivered to the owner, who shall be at liberty to call for the articles of property so inventoried, whenever he or she shall think proper; and the said articles, or the present value thereof, at the time called for, shall be returned, without charge or interest for the use thereof, provided sixty days previous notice of such a call shall be given to the Trustees. AND IT IS ALSO AGREED, That all property which shall be brought into the family, by any member thereof, and of which an Inventory shall not be taken, as aforesaid, shall be considered and holden as being fully and finally given up and consecrated forever, agreeable to the preceding articles of this Covenant.

#### ARTICLE VI.

##### Concerning Services and Property Devoted.

WHEREAS it is inconsistent with the established principles and practice of the United Society, for any family to pay wages to the members of their own family, or to contract with them to work for wages, since all are entitled to equal rights and privileges, according to their standing, while they continue in membership with the family; therefore, WE FURTHER COVENANT AND AGREE, That we will devote and give up our time and service together with the use and improvement of such property as we have brought

into or may hereafter bring into said family or Society, to be freely used and improved for the mutual benefit and support of each other, and also for the support and up-building of said family, or whatever family of Believers we may hereafter become members; and also for the increase and diffusion of the gospel among the children of men; and for such other pious and charitable purposes as the gospel may require.

#### ARTICLE VII.

##### Duties, Privileges and Obligations of Members.

It is also covenanted and agreed, That it shall be the duty of all the covenant members of this family, jointly and individually, to improve their time and talents faithfully, honestly and peaceably, according to their several abilities, to promote the object and support the principles of this Institution, as faithful members of this family and Society; so that the faculties of each may be mutually beneficial to all; and also, that all the consecrated property and avails of the labor, as aforesaid, shall be used and improved in union, according to the third article of this Covenant, in behalf of the family, and for the mutual benefit of the members thereof. AND IT IS ALSO AGREED, That each and every covenant member of the family shall be entitled to the benefits and privileges of the same, according to their several needs and circumstances, whether in sickness, health or old age: PROVIDED NEVERTHELESS, That nothing contained in this Covenant shall be considered as giving any claim to the rights, benefits and privileges of the same, to any person who shall wilfully refuse to comply with, and maintain the faith and principles herein stated and recognized.

#### ARTICLE VIII.

##### Mutual Obligations of Elders & Juniors.

We further covenant and agree, to receive and acknowledge all who shall conform to the principles recognized in this Covenant, as our brethren and sisters in the gospel, and members in union; and also to receive and acknowledge those appointed by the Ministry as Elders of this family, whose duty it is to lead, counsel and direct the members in spiritual concerns, and to advise and counsel in all matters of importance in the concerns of the family, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature; and we solemnly and conscientiously, as in the presence of God, covenant, promise and agree, to and with each other, that we will conform and subject ourselves, in union, as brothers and sisters, to the established faith and principles of our community, as aforesaid, and to all the orders, rules and regulations of our family and order, according to the principles aforesaid, and in obedience to the Elders and Trustees, appointed as aforesaid, who shall be regulated and governed by the faith and principles of the gospel, according to the established rules of the Society, and agreeable to the several statements and Articles of this Covenant.

#### ARTICLE IX.

##### Admission of New Members.

As we do not consider ourselves called by the gospel for the purpose of laying up a temporal interest in this world, nor to labor for ourselves alone; but for the increase of the gospel of Christ, and to diffuse its sacred and benevolent principles among the children of men who may be willing to receive the same; Therefore, WE FURTHER COVENANT AND AGREE, That whenever any person or persons, being of lawful age, and having received faith in the gospel of Christ, shall desire to obtain a privilege among us, to prove their faith by their works, and it shall be judged expedient by the leading authority aforesaid, to admit such person or persons upon trial, agreeable to the conditions of this Covenant, which

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they shall first read, or hear distinctly read, to their full understanding, then, on signing the same, and maintaining the principles thereof, they shall be admitted to all the benefits and privileges herein specified, and shall be considered as members of this family, so long as they continue to support and maintain the orders, rules and regulations thereof. And further: it is to be expressly understood, that, altho minors may, on particular occasions, by consent of the leading authority, be received under the care and protection of the family; yet no such minor can be employed in or by the family for wages of any description, of which such minor or his or her friends must be duly notified.

#### ARTICLE X.

##### BOOK of Records To Be Kept.

We further covenant and agree, That it shall be the duty of the Trustees to keep, or cause to be kept, a Book or Books of Record, in which shall be recorded a true and correct copy of this Covenant; also all appointments, removals and changes in office, of Elders and Trustees; all admissions, removals, departures and deceases; together with all other matters and transactions of a public nature that are necessary to be recorded for the benefit of the family, and for the preservation and security of the documents, papers and written instruments pertaining to the interest and concerns of the family committed to their charge. And such records shall be inspected once a year, at least, and oftener if necessary, by the leading authority of the family, who, together with the Trustees, shall be the official auditors of the same; and the signature of one or more of said auditors, with the date of inspection and approval, shall be deemed sufficient authority for the correctness of the facts and matters so recorded.

#### ARTICLE XI.

##### No Charges nor Demands to be Made.

As the sole object, purpose and design of our uniting together as a family in gospel order, was, from the beginning, and still is, faithfully and honestly to improve and diffuse the various gifts and talents, both of a spiritual and temporal nature, with which we are endowed by our Divine Creator, for the mutual protection, support, comfort and happiness of each other, as brethren and sisters in the gospel, and for such other pious and charitable purposes as the gospel may require; therefore, WE DO, by virtue of this Covenant, solemnly and conscientiously, as in the presence of God, and in mutual faith with each other, unitedly and individually, for ourselves, our heirs and assigns, promise and agree, that we will never hereafter, neither directly nor indirectly, under any circumstances whatever, contrary to the conditions of this Covenant, bring any charge of debt, damage or demand, against the aforesaid Calvin Green and Richard Bushnell, nor against the Deacons or Trustees, or their successors in office & trust, nor against any member or members of the aforesaid United Society called Shakers, either jointly or severally, on account of any labor or service whatever, which we have done or performed, or which we may hereafter do or perform, in our capacity of covenant members of this family and Society; nor on account of the use and improvement of our property, or any part thereof, the use of which has been given as aforesaid; nor on account of any property which we may hereafter give up and devote to the aforesaid uses and purposes, according to the fourth, fifth and sixth Articles of this Covenant.

#### ARTICLE XII.

THIS COVENANT TO BE A WITNESS IN ALL CASES.

In order to secure to ourselves our just and natural rights and privileges, according to the laws of God and the free institutions of our country, and to prevent collisions and litigations, and insure justice and equity to our fellow creatures, as far as depends upon our connection and intercourse with them, WE DO HEREBY PUBLISH AND DECLARE, That this Covenant shall be a full and sufficient witness for us before all men, in all cases of question and law, respecting all, or any part of our property, labor or services, given, rendered and devoted as aforesaid.

IN CONFIRMATION of all the aforesaid statements, covenants, promises and Articles of agreement, we have hereunto set our hands and seals, commencing on this thirteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine.

Notes from the Record.

1814.

The North Family of the United Society in New Lebanon, being the gathering family or order which in its temporalities has been under the charge of the Deacons and or Trustees of the United interest of the Church or first family in said Society- was organized by the proper authority into a family or order to have the immediate charge of their own temporal affairs, -Ebenezer Bishop and Calvin Green being the Elders of said family and order and Samuel Ellis and Abraham Hendricksen were appointed Trustees.

1820. October. The written Covenant of the aforesaid North Family was revised and adapted to their present circumstances and Order and signed by all the members who then constituted said family.

1829. April. It was found expedient to revise and amend the written Covenant of the said North Family--which was done and signed by all the members who then constituted said family and is with its preliminary remarks in manner and form following.

As Copied Above.