



PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

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THE INTERVIEW(S)

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GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY

PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

I. **PRE-REQUISITES** for Becoming a Member of Grace Bible Church Rugby

- A. Admission to GBCR's church membership is granted on an individual basis. Husbands and Wives need to complete the membership process individually.
- B. Each applicant must have a credible testimony of faith in Christ affirmed by the elders.
- C. Each applicant must have been baptized by immersion after their salvation, or be willing to be baptized prior to becoming a member.
 - 1. Applicants who have never been baptized by immersion after their salvation, must attend and successfully complete the Baptism Class taught at GBCR.
 - 2. For Applicants who are unable to be baptized by immersion after salvation due to a legitimate physical or medical issue, the Elders reserve the right to permit them into membership without immersion upon their successful completion of the whole membership process. This exception is only provided in very rare cases.
- D. Each applicant must successfully finish all 4 Parts of ***The Pathway to Membership***.

II. **PATHWAY** to Becoming a Member of Grace Bible Church Rugby

Getting to know one another before entering into a membership relationship with one another takes time and effort for both GBCR and the applicant for membership. Our membership process seeks to get to know each applicant and allow each applicant to better get to know GBCR before making the mutual decision resulting in Church Membership.

We call our membership process: ***The Pathway to Membership***, and it consists of **4 MAIN PARTS**: ***The Documents***, ***The Interview(s)***, ***The Church*** and ***The Welcome***.

A. **Part 1 – The Documents**

Completing "The Documents" carefully and honestly will require some time and effort. The "self-paced" nature of **Part 1** provides the Applicant with freedom to complete the requirements as their schedule allows.

Each applicant will receive three (3) church documents from GBCR:

- ***Statement of Faith (SOF)***,
- ***Church Rules (CR)*** and
- ***Application-Questionnaire (A-Q)***.

***PAPER or DIGITAL versions** of all 3 documents (SOF, CR & A-Q) **are available upon request.**

- **Applicants who choose to use the PAPER version of these documents** need to complete ALL 3 documents as instructed below, and then give ALL 3 PAPER Documents to an Elder after a Sunday morning service.
- **Applicants who choose to use the DIGITAL version of these documents** need to complete ALL 3 documents as instructed below, and then EMAIL ALL 3 DIGITAL PDFs to one of the Elders.

1. 1st DOCUMENT - GBCR'S *Statement of Faith* (SOF).

- a. Each Applicant is to **READ, HIGHLIGHT & RETURN** their highlighted copy of GBCR'S **SOF** to the Elders.
- b. Each Applicant must highlight their copy of the **SOF** using what we call, **"The Traffic Light Highlighting System,"** illustrated below:
 - 1) Highlight Your **AGREEMENT** in **GREEN**
 - 2) Highlight Your **UNCERTAINTY** in **YELLOW**
 - 3) Highlight Your **DISAGREEMENT** in **RED**
- c. If the Applicant is using the **DIGITAL version** of the **SOF**, then follow the instructions listed above for highlight the PDF.
- d. If the Applicant is using the **PAPER version** of the **SOF**, follow instructions below:
 - 1) For Areas of **AGREEMENT** – Simply **BRACKET** those sections in **GREEN**.
 - 2) For Areas of **UNCERTAINTY** – **HIGHLIGHT ALL THE TEXT** in **YELLOW**.
 - 3) For Areas of **DISAGREEMENT** – **HIGHLIGHT ALL THE TEXT** in **RED**.

See the **EXAMPLES** below:

NOT THIS WAY

VII. LAST THINGS

A. Death

1. Believers After Death

a. We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immortal consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:23-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:6).

2. Unbelievers After Death

a. We teach that the souls of the unsaved, at death, are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:26; Revelation 20:13-15) when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29).

b. We teach that the Unbeliever will eventually appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and be condemned for their sins without any hope of forgiveness (Revelation 20:11-15), and afterward the unbeliever will be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off forever from the life of God (Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Matthew 25:41-46). We reject annihilationism (aka "Conditional Immortality") as being unbiblical (Mark 9:48; Jude 13; Rev. 14:11; 20:10).

B. Resurrection

1. We teach the bodily resurrection of all men: the saved will be resurrected to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-29; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

C. The Rapture of the Church

1. We teach the personal, physical, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:30) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11).

2. We teach that, between the rapture of the church and Christ's glorious return to the earth with his saints (1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 19:8, 14), that Christ will reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

YES! THIS WAY

VII. LAST THINGS

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These highlighted areas will be part of the talking points of **Part 2 – The Interview(s)**.

Uncertainty or Disagreement do not necessarily disqualify a person immediately from becoming member.

For example, being uncertain about some doctrinal matters, such as End Times Prophecy (aka Eschatology) is common and is not a concern to GBCR'S Elders. The Elders DO NOT expect New Believers or Believers from non-Christian families, etc to have mastered the Bible before becoming a member.

Each Applicant must display a willingness to be taught the Bible by GBCR'S Elders. This teachability is an essential component for any Applicant to become a member of GBCR. New Believers or Believers who have not had a strong biblical background will usually have a number of areas of Uncertainty. We expect to see these uncertainties highlighted documents in the documents.

All teachers in the church, whether they be Elders, Bible Study leaders or even Sunday School Teachers, must fully subscribe to GBCR'S Statement of Faith.

There are some areas of disagreement, however, that will prevent an Applicant from becoming a member. These decisions are made by the Elders on a case by case basis.

The goal of this robust process is to better know and understand each Applicant in order for the Elders to determine if membership can be granted.

2. 2nd DOCUMENT - GBCR'S Church Rules (CR).

- a. The CR has more of what we teach & how we operate as a church.
- b. As an Independent Evangelical Church, GBCR has a written statement of faith.
- c. GBCR also has its own church distinctives, practices and set policies that may or may not be identical to that of the Applicant's former church.
- d. By carefully READING GBCR'S Church Rules, we are seeking to make the Applicant aware of our church distinctives, practices and current policies in place at GBCR.
- e. Each Applicant is to **READ, HIGHLIGHT & RETURN** their copy of their highlighted **CR** to the Elders using the same highlighting system they employed going through GBCR'S **SOF**.

3. 3rd DOCUMENT - GBCR'S Application-Questionnaire for Membership (A-Q).

- a. The **A-Q** is both an application and a spiritual questionnaire.
- b. Each Applicant is to **READ, FULLY COMPLETE & RETURN** their copy of the **A-Q** to the Elders.
 - 1). * **No highlighting is needed when completing the A-Q.**
 - 2). The **A-Q** must be thoroughly completed before it is submitted to the Elders. Blanks in the **A-Q** usually lead to delays in the membership process.

4. Once ALL THREE (3) documents are fully completed as instructed above, the Applicant should return their highlighted SOF, CR and their completed A-Q to one of GBCR'S Elders.

5. Once the Elders have had the opportunity to read over the Applicant's highlighted SOF, CR & A-Q, the Elders will contact the Applicant(s) to set up a date and time to proceed to Part 2 – The Interview(s).

B. Part 2 – The Interview(s)

1. The PURPOSES of the Interview(s)

This part of the process should be marked by a significant amount of AGREEMENT. Mark 3:25 and Luke 11:17 says that a divided house and a divided kingdom cannot stand but is laid waste and falls.

- a. To discuss the Applicant's highlighted SOF, CR & A-Q.
- b. To help the Applicant and the Church Leadership better understand each other.
- c. To provide the Applicant with opportunity to ask Interviewers additional questions about GBCR'S Statement of Faith, Church Rules & Application-Questionnaire.
- d. To determine if Applicant should proceed with the Membership Process or not.

2. The PEOPLE of the Interview(s)

- a. Husbands and Wives can be interviewed together.
- b. The Elders will appoint two people to conduct the Interview(s)

3. The PROCESS of the Interview(s)

- a. The Interviewers will want to discuss particular portions of the SOF, CR & A-Q that have been highlighted in YELLOW (things about which the Applicant is Uncertain) and those things that have been highlight in RED (things about which the Applicant is in DISAGREEMENT).
- b. Usually the 1st Interview answers all the questions that need to be covered in order for the Interview team or the Elders to guide the Applicant to the next step in the membership process. Occasionally, however, additional interviews are necessary.
- c. After the Interviewers or the Elders have completed their Interview with the Applicant(s), the Interviewers will return to the Elders to discuss the content of the Interview.

4. The POSSIBLE OUTCOMES of the Interview(s) – *Usually 1 out of the 5 following results:*

- a. The Elders invite the Applicant to continue to **PART 3** of the Membership Process.
- b. The Elders invite the Applicant to attend additional meeting with the Elders or to participate in a Bible Study or series of Bible studies on a particular biblical topic discussed during the interview.
- c. The Elders invite the Applicant to attend the ***Fundamentals of the Faith Class*** (FOF) before, during or after continuing to **Part 3** of the Membership Process.
- d. The Elders or the Applicant may choose to end the Membership Process altogether, resulting in the Applicant not entering into GBCR Membership.

C. Part 3 – The Church – (via 10 Sermons & 2 Classes)

1. *Listen to Select Sermons About Christ's Church*

- a. After GBCR'S Elders have invited the Applicant to proceed to **Part 3** of the Membership Process, the Applicant will need to listen to a select number of online sermons related to the Bible's teaching concerning Christ's Church.
- b. The Applicant will receive a link to these select number of online sermons from the Elders or someone appointed by the Elders to assist the Applicant.
- c. In addition to watching and/or listening to these select sermons on the Church, the Applicant should take notes about the key points that are raised in these sermons. These notes are not intended to be a word-for-word transcript. They are simply intended to ensure that the Applicant has understood the content and even perhaps the structure of the sermons. If the Applicant has any questions, concerns or disagreement about what they hear in these select sermons about the Church, then the Applicant should discuss these matters with one of the Interviewers or one of the Elders of GBCR. This is intended to allow Applicant and Elders further opportunity to get to know one another in this whole process.
- d. Watching the video sermons and listening to the Audio sermons is intended to help the Applicant understand what GBCR believes and teaches about Christ's Church, and how GBCR operates as Christ's Church.
- e. This step should not be treated lightly as questions about these select sermons will probably be asked in the subsequent Membership classes.

2. *Attend Sunday Afternoon Pre-Membership Classes About GBCR'S Ministries & Practices*

- a. By this point the Applicant is nearly through with the Membership Process. Having said that, there are still a number of things that the Applicant still needs to learn about how GBCR operates as a church.
- b. These pre-membership classes take place 3 – 4 times per year, depending on the availability of the Elders or duly trained teachers for this class.
- c. The pre-membership classes are geared to cover as many of these distinctives and ministries as we can cover in a short period of time.
- d. These pre-membership classes typically meet for 2 consecutive Sunday afternoons for about 2+ hours and cover about 8-10 specific areas of church life at GBCR.
- e. At this point of the membership process the Applicant or the Elders can still end the process for the Applicant entering into membership.
- f. After the successful attending and completion of the pre-membership class, the Applicant will need to re-assert their desire for membership to the Elders. This usually takes place verbally, at the end of the final pre-membership class.

- 1). The teacher of the pre-membership class will privately ask each Applicant something like, “Having heard what we teach and how we operate as a church, do you still desire to enter the membership of GBCR?”
- 2). The Applicant will usually respond in one of the following ways: “Yes,” “No,” or “I’d like more time to think about it.”
- 3). Whatever is communicated to the Teacher will be told to the Elders for their consideration as well.

D. Part 4 – The Welcome – (Right-Hand-of-Fellowship Ceremony)

1. If the Applicant desires to enter the membership of GBCR after the pre-membership class, AND if the Elders are unanimous in their decision to receive the Applicant into membership, then this will lead to the final part of the membership process, Part 4 – The Welcome.
2. The Elders Inform Applicant About their Approval to enter into membership.
3. The Elders & Approved Applicant Set Date for the Right-Hand-of-Fellowship (RHOF) Ceremony.
4. The Approved Applicant Participates in RHOF Ceremony.
5. After the RHOF ceremony is successfully completed, the individual is considered to be an official member of Grace Bible Church Rugby.

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THE DOCUMENTS



GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY

PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP



This Statement of Faith for Grace Bible Church Rugby was taken from GBCR'S Constitution that was Updated & Submitted to the Charity Commission on **29 January 2020**

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY
Statement of Faith

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I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

- A. **We teach** that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary Word of God, inspired equally in all parts, (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- B. **We teach** that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the normal, literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 31:17).
- C. **We teach** that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- D. **We teach** that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship; meaning that The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Pet. 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).
- E. **We teach** that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20). The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the normal, literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20).
- F. **We teach** it is the responsibility of believers to carefully ascertain the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations (2 Tim. 3:14-17).
- G. **We teach** that Scripture stands in judgment over men; never do men stand in judgment over Scripture (John 12:48).

II. GOD

- A. **SUMMARY:** We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14) — each equally deserving worship and obedience.
- B. **God the Father**
 - 1. **We teach** that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:6).
 - 2. He is the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9).
 - 3. As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe He is sovereign in creation (Gen. 1:1, 1:31; Ps. 103:19; Job 37:1-13), providence (Matt. 10:29; Ps 22:28; Rom. 8:28; Gen. 50:20) and Redemption (John 6:44; John 6:65; Acts 13:48; 16:14; Rom.11:34-36; 1 Cor. 1:30-31).

4. **We teach** God's fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18).
5. He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11).
6. He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron. 29:11).
7. In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Habak. 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet. 1:17).
8. He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

C. God the Son

1. **We teach** that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is co-equal, consubstantial, and co-eternal with God the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).
2. **We teach** that all things were created by, through and for Jesus Christ (John 1:3; Col. 1:16).
3. **We teach** that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Philip. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).
4. **We teach** that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Col. 2:9).
5. **We teach** that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He is God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 9:6; John 1:29; Philip. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25-26; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
6. **We teach** that, in the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity voluntarily laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philip. 2:5-8).
7. **We teach** that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24).

8. **We teach** that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).
9. **We teach** that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 4:25; 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
10. **We teach** that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 1:4; 4:25). Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (Rom. 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23).
11. **We teach** that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the rapture, and that He will return with His church in glory, and that will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:1-6; Zech. 14).
12. **We teach** that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):
 - a. He will judge Believers (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).
 - b. He will judge Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - c. He will judge the Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15).
13. As the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), the Head of His Body, the church, (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Saviour (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

D. God the Holy Spirit

1. **We teach** that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, uncreated, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternality (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30; Matt. 12:28; Rom. 15:18-19) and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is co-equal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).
2. **We recognize** His sovereign activity in creation (Ps. 104:30; Job 33:4), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).
3. **We teach** that the Holy Spirit empowered the church at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Cor. 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).

4. **We teach** that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration (Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6), baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13).
5. **We teach** that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27), who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (2 Pet. 1:19-21). We teach that the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit enables Believers to understand the spiritual truths taught in Scripture (1 Cor. 2:12-14). We teach that every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (Gal. 3:1-5; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18).
6. **We teach** that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22-23; Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 2:22). In addition to The Holy Spirit's work in the world, the life of Christ and the plan of salvation, we teach that the Holy Spirit has an extensive ministry to Believers, including: Teaching (John 14:26), Guiding (Rom. 8:14), Praying (Rom. 8:26), Sealing (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14), Gifting (1 Cor. 12:11), Indwelling (John 14:17), Filling/Strengthening (Acts 4:8, 31), Loving (Rom. 15:30; 1 John 4:8, 16), Assuring (Rom. 5:5; 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6), Restraining (Acts 16:6-7; 20:22), Convicting (John 16:8), Sanctifying (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2), Comforting (Acts 9:31), Helping (John 14:16, 26; 15:26).
7. **We teach** that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today (1 Cor. 12:4-11), and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth (2 Cor. 12:12), and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (1 Cor. 13:8-10; 2 Tim. 4:20).

III. MAN

- A. **We teach** that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).
- B. **We teach** that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God (Isa 43:6-7, Ps 86:9, Is 60:21, Rom 11:36 Rev 4:11), enjoy God's fellowship (Col 1:16, Matt 26:29), live his life in the will of God (Ex. 20:6, Deut. 5:10, John 14:21), and by this, accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Rev 4:11).

- C. **We teach** that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).
- D. **We teach** that, because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).
- E. **We teach** that marriage is an institution given by God to mankind and is only to be between one man and one woman as in the initial design (Genesis 2:24), and as later affirmed by Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:8; Mark 10:6-12). Any engagement in sexual activity outside of a marriage as the Bible defines it, is considered as sexual immorality in the Bible, and is a legitimate ground for divorce (Matthew 19:9) and church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:2, 13).

IV. SALVATION

- A. **Summary:** We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ through the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- B. **Regeneration**
 - 1. **We teach** that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24). We teach that Regeneration is solely the work of the Holy Spirit which precedes conversion (John 3:3, 5-8; John 6:29, 63-65). While Regeneration and conversion are closely related biblical truths, they are distinct biblical truths that should not be confused or used interchangeably. Conversion (which includes the sinners Spirit enabled Repentance of sin and Confession of Jesus Christ as Lord) follows after a person has been brought to life spiritually (Regenerated) by the Holy Spirit. Since every unbelieving person is spiritually dead before Regeneration (Eph. 2:1ff), no unbelieving person can repent or confess Jesus Christ as Lord in a saving way without first being regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits in keeping with repentance (Matt. 3:8) as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Philip. 2:12b; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:17; 1 John 3:2-3).

C. Election

1. **We teach** that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).
2. **We teach** that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Saviour and Lord (Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself. God's sovereign election will not fail. All that the Father gives to Jesus Christ will come to Jesus Christ in faith, and all who come in faith, Jesus Christ will receive (John 6:37-40, 44).
3. **We teach** that God's saving grace granted to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part or to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph. 1:4-7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:2).
4. **We teach** that election is based upon God's Sovereignty, which He exercises in harmony with His other attributes, including: His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Eph. 1:4-5; Rom. 9:11-16). This sovereign election will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:25-28; 2 Tim. 1:9).

D. Justification

1. **We teach** that justification before God is an act of God (Rom. 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Isa. 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Philip. 2:11).
2. This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

E. Sanctification

1. **Summary:** We teach that there are two parts to sanctification. Positional and Progressive Sanctification. Positional Sanctification refers to the believer's position or standing before God, based on the death of Christ. Progressive Sanctification refers to the process of being progressively set apart from sin and being progressively conformed to the image of Christ.
2. **We teach** that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).

3. **We teach** that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23).
4. In this respect, **we teach** that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

F. Security

1. **We teach** that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).
2. **We teach** that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

G. Separation

1. **We teach** that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1), and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Timothy 3:1-5).
2. **We teach** that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Saviour (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).
3. **We also teach** that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).
4. **We teach** that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:16; 2 Cor. 6:17) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

V. THE CHURCH

A. Christ and His Church

1. **We teach** that the church is a unique spiritual body designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Eph. 2:11-3:6).
2. **We teach** that the church is distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32; 3:11; Eph. 2:19-20) and a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6; 5:32).
3. **We teach** that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15).
4. **We teach** that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the church (Phil. 2:11; Eph. 1:22; 4:15-16; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19).
5. **We teach** that the Lord provided two church offices for the earthly administration of His church, namely: **Elders** (1 Timothy 3:1-7) and **Deacons** (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

B. The Elders of Christ's Church

1. **We teach** that Christ appointed and gave His authority to lead the church to biblically qualified men called "Elders" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:17-22).
2. **We teach** that the Lord has entrusted His flock (the church) into the care and protection of the Elders (Acts 20:28), and that Jesus Christ will strictly judge the Elders for their teaching, preaching (James 3:1) and for their leadership over the church (1 Peter 5:4; Heb. 13:17b).
3. **We teach** that Jesus Christ requires the Elders to lead the church in the following areas and ways. Elders are to:
 - a. **Shepherd** Christ's church (1 Peter 5:2a; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28)
 - b. **Rule well** over Christ's Church (1 Tim 5:17a)
 - c. **Exercise oversight** over Christ's church (1 Peter 5:2b; Acts 20:28)
 - d. **Manage** the spiritual, physical & financial needs of Christ's church (1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 11:30)
 - e. **Be Examples** for Christ's church to follow (1 Peter 5:3b; 1 Tim. 4:12; Heb. 13:7)
 - f. **Read, Teach & Preach** the Scriptures to Christ's church (1 Tim. 3:2; 3:16-4:2, 6, 11, 13, 16; 1 Cor. 4:6)
 - g. **Guard** the Gospel of Christ's church (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14; Jude 3)
 - h. **Admonish (Warn/Correct)** Christ's church (1 Thess. 5:12b; James 5:19)
 - i. **Protect** Christ's church from wolves arising within congregation (Acts 20:29-31) and those who would divide the congregation (Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; Jude 19).
 - j. **Restore and/or Cleanse** the church through church discipline as outlined in Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; 3 John 9-11.
 - k. **Care** for Christ's church (1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 20:28)
 - l. **Equip** Christ's church for work in the Lord's Service (Eph. 4:12)

C. The Deacons of Christ's Church

1. **We teach** that the office of deacon, by virtue of the meaning of the word (“διάκονος”) is an office that is designed for “serving” the church, not “leading” the church (1 Tim. 3:8, 10, 13; cf. Acts 6:1-7 for an early example of how deacons might serve the church).
2. **We teach** that deacons are recognized servants of the church (1 Tim. 3:13) who assist the elders in caring for the congregation’s physical and spiritual needs by implementing actions and practices specifically outlined by the elders (cf. Acts 6:1-5).
3. **We teach** that in order for a man to be recognized as a deacon, he must first meet the biblical qualifications of 1 Tim. 3:8-13 including a period of testing (1 Tim. 3:11).

D. The Congregation of Christ's Church

1. **We teach** that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).
2. **We teach** that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).
3. **We teach** that membership into Christ’s church is limited to only those who have been saved by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptised by immersion after being saved (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:41; 10:47-48).
4. **We teach** that the congregation has responsibilities to Jesus Christ, every other member in the church and to the Elders of Christ’s church.
 - a. **We teach** that each member of the congregation is to obey and submit to everything that is taught in the Scriptures (Matt. 28:20).
 - b. **We teach** that each member of the congregation is to use their spiritual gifts and abilities to minister and serve other people in Christ’s church (1 Cor. 12:7).
 - c. **We teach** that each member is to respect, obey and submit to the Elders of Christ’s church in all matters concerning the church (1 Thess. 5:13; Heb. 13:17).

E. The Purpose of Christ's Church

1. **We teach** that the purpose of Christ’s church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17; 4:1-5), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

2. **We teach** the importance of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matt. 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16; 3:10-11).

F. The Autonomy of Christ's Church.

1. **We teach** the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5).
2. **We teach** it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith (Acts 11:22, 27). Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation (Titus 1:5; Acts 15:36). The elders should determine all other matters of church membership, church policy, church discipline, benevolence, and church government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Cor. 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

G. Spiritual Gifts and Christ's Church

1. **We teach** the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 2:10; 4:12; Rev. 22:12). We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world (John 15:5). To that end, He gives spiritual gifts to Believers in the church. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).
2. **We teach** that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: ***miraculous gifts and ministering gifts***.
 - a. **Miraculous Gifts** of divine revelation and healing were given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:12).
 - 1). **We teach** that no one possesses the gift of healing today, but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Cor. 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).
 - 2). **We teach** that miraculous gifts can be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Cor. 13:13-14:12; Rev. 13:13-14).
 - 3). **We teach** that with the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Cor. 13:8-12).
 - b. **Ministering Gifts** were given to equip believers for edifying one another (Eph. 4:12). We teach that the only spiritual gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory, non-miraculous ministering gifts given for edification (Rom. 12:6-8).

H. The Two Ordinances of Christ's Church

1. **We teach** that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42).
2. **Believers Baptism. We teach** Christian baptism is the divinely ordained means by which an individual declares their faith in Christ (Acts 2:28, 31; Acts 16:13-15; Acts 16:16-34). Baptism by immersion is the "mode" of baptism or the way in which baptism was carried out in the New Testament. The person being baptized was immersed or put completely under the water and then brought back up again (Acts 8:36-39). Baptism by immersion is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42) and the first step of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20).
3. **The Lord's Supper. We teach** that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration (a memorial) and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28-32).

VI. ANGELS

A. Holy Angels

1. **We teach** that angels are created beings (Neh. 9:6) and are therefore not to be worshiped (Rev. 19:10).
2. **We teach** that though Angels are a higher order of creation than man (Heb. 2:6-7), they are created to serve God (Heb 1:14) and to worship Him (Heb 1:6; Rev 5:11-12).

B. Fallen Angels

1. **We teach** that Satan is a created angel and the originator of sin (John 8:44). He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).
2. **We teach** that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10); that he is the prince of this world (Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19), who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Col. 2:15); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

VII. LAST THINGS

A. Death

1. *Believers After Death*

- a. **We teach** that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

2. *Unbelievers After Death*

- a. **We teach** that the souls of the unsaved, at death, are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15) when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29).
- b. **We teach** that the Unbeliever will eventually appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and be condemned for their sins without any hope of forgiveness (Revelation 20:11-15), and afterward the unbeliever will be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off forever from the life of God (Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-; Matthew 25:41-46). We reject annihilationism” (aka “Conditional Immortality) as being unbiblical (Mark 9:48; Jude 13; Rev. 14:11; 20:10).

B. Resurrection

1. **We teach** the bodily resurrection of all men: the saved will be resurrected to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

C. The Rapture of the Church

1. **We teach** the personal, physical, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11).
2. **We teach** that between the rapture of the church and Christ’s glorious return to the earth with His saints (1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 19:8, 14, that Christ will reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

D. The Tribulation Period

1. **We teach** that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

E. The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

1. **We teach** that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).
2. **We teach** that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26), but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).
3. **We teach** that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

F. The Judgment of the Lost

1. **We teach** that following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10), whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect all unbelievers and judge each one, both great and small, at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).
2. **We teach** that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

G. Eternity

1. **We teach** that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release and judgment of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22).
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

VIII. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

- A. Being a Christian is more than identifying yourself with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, mankind, and salvation. Consider the following truths found in Scripture.
- B. **God Is Sovereign Creator.** Contemporary thinking says man is the product of evolution. But the Bible says we were created by a personal God to love, serve, and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals it was Jesus Himself who created everything (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). Therefore, He also owns and rules everything (Psalm 103:19). That means He has authority over our lives and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship.
- C. **God Is Holy.** God is absolutely and perfectly holy (Isaiah 6:3), therefore He cannot commit or approve of evil (James 1:13). God requires holiness of us as well. First Peter 1:16 says, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
- D. **Mankind Is Sinful.** According to Scripture, everyone is guilty of sin: "There is no man who does not sin" (1 Kings 8:46). That doesn't mean we're incapable of performing acts of human kindness. But we're utterly incapable of understanding, loving, or pleasing God on our own. (Romans 3:10-12).
- E. **Sin Demands a Penalty.** God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death: (Ezekiel 18:4). That's why simply changing our patterns of behavior can't solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences.
- F. **Jesus Is Lord and Saviour.** The New Testament reveals it was Jesus Himself who created everything (Colossians 1:16). Therefore He owns and rules everything (Psalm 103:19). That means He has authority over our lives and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love has provided a Saviour who paid the penalty and died for sinners (1 Peter 3:18). Christ's death satisfied the demands of God's justice and Christ's perfect life satisfied the demands of God's holiness (2 Corinthians 5:21), thereby enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Him (Romans 3:26).
- G. **The Character of Saving Faith.** True faith is always accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sins to Him, and making a conscious choice to turn from sin (Luke 13:3,5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9) and pursue Christ (Matthew 11:28-30; John 17:3) and obedience to Him (1 John 2:3). It isn't enough to believe certain facts about Christ. Even Satan and his demons believe in the true God (James 2:19), but they don't love and obey Him. True saving faith always responds in obedience (Ephesians 2:10).



The *Church Rules* for Grace Bible Church Rugby were officially revised by GBCR'S Elders on 22 April 2020

INTRODUCTION TO GBCR'S CHURCH RULES

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY (GBCR) IS A DIVERSE CHURCH. We are diverse culturally, ethnically, and to a lesser degree, theologically and ecclesiastically. Many of our members come to us from different kinds of churches, bringing with them a wide range of diverse church policies, church practices, values and theological views. If care is not diligently exercised, then our celebrated diversity can easily become a means of church division. In any church it is easy to misunderstand one another and/or easily offend one another without even realizing it, but in a diverse church like ours, extra care is needed. Our biblical remedy for these potentially awkward moments is to love, be quick to repent, forgive and be patient with one another. GBCR may or may not be exactly like your former church, but as an applicant for GBCR Membership, it is important you take the time and make the effort to get to know who we are, what we believe and how we function as a church.

GBCR IS A LEGAL CHURCH. Our church is a legal, registered charity with the Charity Commission. Under British Law, GBCR is classified as a CIO (*Charitable Incorporated Organization*) that is legally, spiritually and practically led solely by its elders. For some applicants coming from a church governed by one of the many forms of congregational government, GBCR will be a new experience, as GBCR government is Elder-led, not congregationally led. Even the Trustees of GBCR, who assist the Elders with legal matters and legal practices, serve under the authority and leadership of GBCR'S elders. The Elders are held accountable biblically, legally and individually for their biblical qualifications, preaching, teaching, numerous responsibilities & decision-making they are called to do regularly in serving and leading GBCR.

GBCR IS AN ACTIVE CHURCH. Our primary goal as a church is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31) by making Disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19). No matter how active or busy we become, we know our primary purpose and our primary commission in our personal lives and corporately in the church.

The elders admit that these Church Rules are imperfect and will need to be revised and updated in the days ahead. We are not a perfect church, but we will always strive to be a biblical, obedient and God-glorifying church.

On behalf of the elders and members of Grace Bible Church Rugby, we look forward to getting to know you better, and, if the Lord wills, enjoy serving the Lord with you in the days ahead.

Rejoicing in Jesus Christ,
Pastor Tom McConnell

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I. The PURPOSES of Our Church

A. Exaltation

1. **Grace Bible Church Rugby** exists to glorify God by making disciples of all nations and by exalting our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9 & Matt. 28:18-20).
2. The primary purpose of the gathered church is to worship God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
3. While unbelievers are welcomed & invited to GBCR'S Worship services (cf. 1 Cor. 14:24-25), GBCR does not orient its worship of God to please the secular desires of unbelievers.

B. Evangelism

1. GBCR is committed to a God-centered, biblical evangelism that actually "goes" to where the unbelievers are, rather than expecting all the unbelievers to come to where the church meets. We like to say that as a church, "***We gather to worship & scatter to evangelize.***"
2. As a church, we love and embrace as Gospel truth what are called "The Doctrines of Grace." These include: ***Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace*** and ***Perseverance/Preservation of the Saints***.
3. We see no contradiction between what Scripture teaches concerning man's sin, God's Election, Atonement, Grace, God's preservation of the redeemed, and Jesus Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. These Doctrines of Grace motivated and undergirded the Apostle Paul's evangelism rather than hindering it (cf. 2 Timothy 2:10 & Ephesians 1:4).
4. As members of GBCR, we seek to be just as zealous and just as hopeful and obedient in our personal evangelism as the Apostle Paul was when he shared the Gospel. As GBCR members we are not passive in our evangelism, nor are we prayerless as we share the Gospel.

C. Edification

1. "Edification" in Scripture means "*to build up*" (cf. Ephesians 4:12). This is an incredibly positive way to describe a believer's life in the local church according to the Bible.
2. Edifying one another as a regular part of church life is not only the responsibility of the pastor-teachers-elders of the church (cf. Eph. 4:11-13), but it is also the responsibility of every other member of the church as well (cf. Eph. 4:12, 16 & 29).

II. The CORE VALUES of Our Church

A. A High View of Scripture

- 1.** By a High View of Scripture, we mean that we believe in the inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, clarity, reliability, authority and sufficiency of Scripture (cf. All of Psalm 119; Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 20-21). Scripture alone is authoritative for the Lord's church, and not church councils, creeds, extra-biblical writings or non-biblical confessions.
- 2.** Having A High View of Scripture:
 - a.** Leads us to make Scripture the sole source of our worship, our service and our doctrine.
 - b.** Results in us prizing, studying, preaching and doing our best to obey what the Bible rightfully commands and teaches.
 - c.** Results in valuing the consecutive, expository preaching & teaching of Scripture.
 - d.** Leads inexorably to a literal, historical, grammatical, contextual interpretation of the Bible.
 - 1).** Which leads us to embrace the straight-forward, literal understanding of the 6-Days of Creation and our rejection of every form of theistic evolution.
 - 2).** Which leads us to understand the majority of unfulfilled biblical prophecy in a straight-forward, literal (not allegorical or spiritualized) way.
 - 3).** Which leads us to view marriage as being between one man and one woman, unless death or divorce interrupt the husband and wife.
 - 4).** Which leads us to reject any sexual activity outside of marriage as being sinful in God's eyes.
 - 5).** Which leads us to have clarity about who we are in terms of our gender, identity and our human value in that we are made in the image of God. Since we are made in God's image, we believe that all human life is important, including the lives of every baby still in its mother's womb. A High View of Scripture leads us to conclude that abortion is murder, and that homosexuality is a sin.
 - 6).** Which leads us to love those we disagree with in the secular world, and to seek their salvation so that they might experience God's salvation and His very best for their lives, even if the unbelievers initially hate and vilify us as Christians.

B. A High View of God

- 1.** A High View of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit arises out of a High View of Scripture.
 - a.** Scripture speaks of "The Father" as God, "The Son" as God and "The Holy Spirit" as God. And yet, Scripture repeatedly declares there is only one God. We believe that these statements are not contradictory, nor are they fully comprehensible.
 - b.** Scripture teaches that there is one God, yet three distinct persons of the Godhead who exist in a non-modalistic, non-sabellian sense.

- 1). When God refers to Himself using “plurals” (“*Let Us make man in our image*” - Genesis 1:26a and “*Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?*” –& Isaiah 6:8) we believe this refers to God as distinct persons, yet one God.
 - 2). The Nature of God comes into focus when Jesus said, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” The Jewish leaders who crucified Jesus understood Jesus as saying that He had the same nature as God the Father, making Jesus to be God.
 - 3). The non-shared attributes or perfections of God are the possession of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. These non-shared attributes only belong to God.
- c. It has long been acknowledged that the word “Trinity” is not in the Bible, yet from Genesis 1:26 to the Book of Revelation, Scripture teaches, mentions, describes, attributes and reveals God in numerous Trinitarian ways.
 - d. Scripture teaches that Jesus most accurately and definitively reveals who God is and what God is like (cf. John 1:18, Colossians 1:15-20 and Hebrews 1:3).
2. Scripture describes God as being absolutely holy, righteous, just, pure, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-wise.
 3. Living to Glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31) and living to please God (2 Cor. 5:9) reflects GBCR’S affirmation of A High View of God.

C. A Biblical View of Mankind

1. If you were to take just the secular sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, let alone the ever-prevalent Arminianism, it is clear there are numerous unbiblical views of man.
 - a. These Unbiblical views of man say: “***Man is essentially good.***”
 - b. These Unbiblical views of man say: “***Man is mostly good.***”
 - c. These Unbiblical views of man say: “***Man is somewhat good.***”
 - d. These Unbiblical views of man say: “***Man is spiritually sick, but not spiritually dead.***”
 - e. These Unbiblical views of man say: “***Man is nearly dead, but able to choose God without The Holy Spirit’s work of Regeneration.***”
 - f. These Unbiblical views of man say: “***Man is spiritually dead, but still has the power to respond positively to God’s Salvation.***”
2. An unbiblical view of man has numerous negative consequences as a result, not the least of which leads to unbiblical ways of evangelizing unbelievers, over-emphasizing emotional decision-ism, and thinking that the evangelistic person is really able to save a person if they can convince the unbeliever to pray a prayer. All of these unbiblical things have marked so many churches throughout the 18th, 19th, 20th and now the 21st century.

D. A Biblical View of Salvation

1. From the divine perspective, ***“No one seeks for God”*** – Rom. 3:11b
2. Since unbelievers are “spiritually dead” (Eph. 2:1-5) and are spiritually unresponsive without God’s intervention (1 Cor. 2:14), ***how does God save unbelievers?***
 - a. God has chosen to save particular unbelievers (Ephesians 1:4). Unless God has elected a person for salvation, they cannot be saved (John 1:13; 6:29, 44, 65).
 - 1). Becoming “a child of God” is not based on one’s physical birth, “nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of [the will] of God” – John 1:13
 - 2). “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent” – John 6:29
 - 3). Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...” – John 6:44.
 - 4). “And he [Jesus] said, ‘This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father’” – John 6:65.
 - b. God has chosen to save these particular unbelievers through the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:18, 21).
 - c. Only after the Holy Spirit’s work of Regeneration (John 3:3-5 & Titus 3:5-6) can and will the unbeliever repent of their sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ & confess Jesus Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 2:14). Repentance is given to the sinner by God (Acts 11:18) and even the sinner’s ability to believe in a saving way is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-10). While man repents, believes and confesses AFTER the regenerating work of The Holy Spirit and is saved (Rom. 10:9, 10, 13), the saved person cannot take any glory or credit for their repentance, faith or confession as if repenting, believing and confessing were “works” they could do to earn or merit salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:27-28).

E. A Biblical View of the Gospel

1. The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus Christ that the Apostle Paul summarized in **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**.
2. The Gospel includes knowing about God’s absolute holiness, righteousness, love, justice, grace, mercy and love. It includes knowing about mankind’s fall into sin, spiritual death, separation from God, hostility against God, and mankind’s utter and total depravity, effecting our minds, wills, emotions, attitudes and actions.
3. A biblical presentation of the Gospel includes preaching about sin and what sin brings about in the life and death of an unbeliever. It focusses on the Person and saving Work of our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of hell-bound, undeserving sinners. It includes a call for the unbeliever to repent of one’s sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and in his resurrection, and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9, 10 & 13-17). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16).

F. A Biblical View of the Church

1. The Church's ORIGIN

We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ was born on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47; cf. Acts 11:15 – “at the beginning”), having been purchased by the crucified and risen Christ (Acts 20:28; cf. Col. 3:1-4).

2. The Church's PURPOSE/MISSION – To make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20).

3. The Church's LEADERSHIP

- a. Jesus Christ “is the head of the church” (Eph. 5:23b). Jesus continues to exercise His Lordship over the church as is clear from Rev. 1:12-20.
- b. Jesus is the “Chief Shepherd” or “Senior Pastor” according to 1 Peter 5:4 and the Elders of the church serve as “appointed shepherds” under the Chief Shepherd.

4. The Church's RELATIONSHIP TO ISRAEL

- a. We believe that the church and the nation of Israel are related, yet distinct groups, who, in the eternal state, will all be part of the one people of God (Titus 2:14).
- b. We believe that Israel and the church are distinct, and that there is a future for National Israel, including God fulfilling all the promises God made to the Nation of Israel in the Scriptures that are as of yet unfulfilled.

“The New Testament presents the church as a new entity (Eph. 2:15), a mystery not fully revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6; 5:32; Col. 1:26-27)” – *Biblical Doctrine*, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, p. 747.

- c. We reject, as unbiblical, “replacement theology (also called supersessionism) [which] insists that the church is the new Israel. According to [replacement theologians], the blessings promised to the Jewish nation in the Old Testament have been entirely transferred to the church” – *Biblical Doctrine*, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, p. 747.

III. The GOVERNMENT of Our Church

A. GBCR'S Church Government is led by a plurality of biblically qualified Elders. It is NOT congregational.

- 1. We believe that the elder-led church government best accords with the teaching of the New Testament such as 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5; Acts 20:17-38, etc.
- 2. While an Elder-Led church means different things to different people, it means something very specific to us, and these details are clarified below:

a. THE ELDERS LEAD IN ALL CHURCH-RELATED DECISION-MAKING

This means all decisions concerning the practical, financial, organizational, legal, policymaking, and hiring and firing any additional church staff. The Members do have parts to play in recommending Elders, Deacons and a new occupational Pastor. The Members only vote on the final call of the new, occupational preaching Pastor.

b. THE ELDERS LEAD AS A PLURALITY

c. THE ELDERS LEAD WITH BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

B. GBCR'S Church Government is NOT a CONGREGATIONALLY led church.

1. In a number of evangelical churches that have "elders," the elders serve under the congregation's authority.
2. However, at GBCR, the Elders do **NOT** serve under the congregation's authority.
3. Under GBCR'S Church Government, the members serve under the Elders' leadership.

C. GBCR'S Church Government is NOT led by a combination of the Elders and the Deacons and/or Trustees.

1. In some churches, the pastor and the Deacons or the elders and the deacons are the decision-makers and leaders of the church. **However, this is NOT the case at GBCR.**
2. At GBCR, the Deacons have no church authority or decision-making power unless it has been delegated to them specifically by the Elders for a specific benefit to the church.
3. Any delegated powers to the Deacons come from and are removed by the Elders.
4. Even the legal assistants to the Elders, the Trustees, are appointed and removed by the Elders.

D. GBCR'S Church Government is NOT a SOLO leadership where "The Pastor" makes all the decisions.

1. In some evangelical churches, the pastor is "the decision-maker" and the other Elders and members of the church must do exactly as he says, "*because he's the pastor.*" However, this is **NOT the case at GBCR. We reject that kind of church leadership.**
2. While the occupational elder or "The Pastor" may offer ideas, suggestions, changes, solutions, etc to the Elders, "The Pastor" does NOT have more authority than his fellow-elders. At GBCR, every Elder is equal in ***qualification*** and ***authority*** with the occupational Elder who is often called, "The Pastor."
3. While other Elders may frequently acquiesce & submit to the occupational Elder's ideas, they are not compelled to do so.
4. The Eldership of GBCR seeks to make unanimous decisions together, looking for the decision that is most biblical, wise and that best benefits the church.

E. GBCR'S Church Government Includes Protection & Accountability for its Members & its Leaders.

GBCR'S Elders affirm that "***authority without accountability is very dangerous.***" For this reason, GBCR provides several ways to protect and hold accountable both, the church's leaders and its members.

1. GBCR'S MEMBERS Protection & Accountability.

3 John 9-11 contains the Apostle John's rebuke of Diotrophes. The text makes it clear that Diotrophes was a "self-willed" man who rejected Apostolic teaching and instruction. Diotrophes was biblically disqualified from serving as a leader in Christ's church.

a. **PROTECTION for GBCR'S Members**

- 1). **The first and primary protection of GBCR'S Members** is the Elder's daily maintenance of the biblical qualifications to serve as an Elder found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. See ***GBCR'S Statement of Faith*** for more details.
- 2). **The second and ongoing protection of GBCR'S Members** is the Lord's provision of Church Discipline in Matthew 18:15-17. This biblical command is intended to protect one believer from another sinning believer regardless of role in the church (Elder or not). Of course, the use of Matthew 18:15-17 should be for the purpose of reconciliation, not a power-play to remove an Elder with whom a member may disagree.
- 3). **The third form of protection for GBCR'S Members** comes from the annual requirement on the Elders to read, review and reaffirm his agreement, uncertainty or disagreement with GBCR'S doctrinal statement and church rules. Sometimes people's theology change and with those changes may require the particular Elder to resign from his office as an Elder. This requirement protects GBCR'S Members from false teachers who could creep into the church and potentially do harm to GBCR'S Members.

b. **ACCOUNTABILITY of GBCR'S Members**

Church Members also need to be held accountable. Sometimes church members will seek to assert their own authority or their own personal desires within the church, contrary to the Elders' decision. James 4:1-3 describes numerous ways this kind of selfish, rebellion can unfold in a local church. Following Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11, et al, the Elders will be forced to act decisively to protect the church.

2. **GBCR'S ELDERS' Protection & Accountability.**

Depending on the particular church and its members, there are times when even Elders need to be protected from church members. As Laney writes, "*Frequently church members will want to get rid of their pastor and will [falsely] accuse him...*" - (Laney, *A Guide to Church Discipline*, p. 120).

a. **PROTECTION for GBCR'S Elders**

- 1). **The first protection for GBCR'S Elders** is the Scriptures delegated authority to the Elders to protect the church from false teachers (Jude) or "fierce wolves who would seek to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30).
- 2). **The second protection for GBCR'S Elders** is the Lord's provision of Church Discipline in Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:10-11, et al. Of course, the use of these Scriptures should initially be for the purpose of reconciliation, but if the sinning member refuses to discuss the sin they have done and repent of it, then these verses become a real protection for the Elders and also the other non-sinners members of the church.
- 3). **The third protection for GBCR'S Elders** is the requirement of **1 Timothy 5:19**. Satan's strategy has always included the element of "Divide and conquer." This includes attacking the shepherds so that the sheep scatter. To protect against base-less, false accusations or slander against an Elder by some sinning member, the Apostle Paul provided in 1 Timothy 5:19.

b. ACCOUNTABILITY OF GBCR'S Elders

- 1).** Corporately and Individually, GBCR'S Elders must see to it that they maintain the biblical qualifications necessary to continue to serve as Elders. If the Elders believe that a fellow-Elder may be lacking one or more of the Biblical Qualifications to serve as an Elder, then the Elders must discuss this matter among themselves with the particular Elder present who is under scrutiny.
- 2).** Annually, each GBCR Elder must read, review and reaffirm their full agreement, uncertainties and disagreement with GBCR'S Statement of Faith and discuss each of these areas with the whole of the Elders at an appointed Elders' Meeting. If an Elder can no longer agree with the Statement of Faith, and the remaining Elders are unwilling to update or change the Statement of Faith, then the Elders must decide if the dissenting Elder should be removed from serving as an Elder. Usually full agreement with the Statement of Faith is necessary to remain in office.
- 3).** Any Elder should be confronted privately, just like any other member, in accord with the instructions of Matthew 18:15-17. Elders who sin and refuse to repent of their sin will experience the same process of other unrepentant members. If an Elder repents, then depending on the nature and knowledge of his sin (touching him "being above reproach"), he may or may not be able to remain in his office as an Elder. While the Lord forgives all sin, there are some sins, which by their nature, make it difficult or impossible for a man to be above reproach and thus remain or return to serving as an Elder. The Elders of GBCR will have the final decision on this difficult but important matter if it occurs.

F. GBCR'S Church Government Includes Contingency Plans for Continuity of Leadership

1. Scenario #1 – GBCR HAS NO OCCUPATIONAL ELDER (aka "The Pastor")

- a. *Suggested Solution #1*** – The remaining plurality of Elders follow the instructions provided in GBCR'S "Elder Appointment Manual."
- b. *Suggested Solution #2*** – If the loss of the occupational elder results in GBCR No longer having a Plurality of Elders, then proceed to instructions provided for this situation below.

2. Scenario #2 – GBCR NO LONGER HAS A PLURALITY OF ELDERS

- a. *Suggested Solution #1*** - Look within GBCR'S Own Membership for a Possible Elder
 - 1).** The remaining Elder is to look at the membership of GBCR and consider if there are any possible candidates who might be biblically qualified to serve as an Elder.
 - 2).** The remaining Elder is to invite the congregation for their recommendation of a potentially qualified man from within the church membership.
 - 3).** The remaining Elder should consider involving, where possible, other biblically qualified, trusted Elders from sister evangelical churches to help him evaluate the potential elder.

b. *Suggested Solution #2* – Look outside GBCR’S Membership for a Possible Elder

- 1).** If there are no biblically qualified men within the membership of GBCR, then the remaining Elder is to contact trusted or recommended sister evangelical churches and ask for help.
- 2).** The remaining Elder can make smaller day-to-day decisions temporarily, but would rely upon the counsel of volunteer Elders from other sister evangelical churches to help in making bigger decisions. This arrangement should be viewed as a temporary, stop-gap measure until another Elder can be appointed at GBCR.

3. Scenario #3 – GBCR NO LONGER HAS ANY ELDERS

- a. *Suggested Solution #1*** – Either the Deacons or a key person can contact a sister, evangelical church for help in overseeing the appointment of biblically qualified elders using GBCR’S Elder Appointment Manual. The sister evangelical church may identify potentially qualified men from within GBCR or they may need to look outside of GBCR’S Membership to find biblically qualified men.
- b. *Suggested Solution #2*** – The remaining membership can decide to voluntarily and permanently close GBCR following the charity commission rules found in GBCR’S CIO Constitution.

IV. The ORGANISATION of Our Church

A. Our Church Leadership - The Elders

1. Biblical Qualifications of the Elders

- a.** The man being considered for the office of an elder at GBCR is not required to be a perfect man. However, this same man is required to meet the criteria stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:17-22.
- b.** No matter how skilled a man is in theology, leadership, business or academics; no matter how much he contributes materially to the life of the church; no matter how popular or well-known a man might be; if he does not meet the biblical qualifications of an Elder stated in Scripture, then that man is not eligible to serve as an elder in GBCR.

2. Responsibilities of the Elders

- a.** The elders must have and demonstrate a commitment to resolving disagreements and conflicts within the church following the relevant biblical passages.
 - 1).** Being quick to biblically repent and quick to biblically forgive and be reconciled is what each elder agrees to pursue.
 - 2).** Creating divisions in the church over disagreements or conflicts with others within the membership of the church is sinful and will be treated as such.
 - 3).** Refusing to repent, refusing to forgive, refusing to be biblically reconciled to a brother or sister in the membership of GBCR is sinful and will be treated as such.

- b. Shepherd Christ's church (1 Peter 5:2a; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28).
- c. Rule well over Christ's Church (1 Tim 5:17a).
- d. Exercise oversight over Christ's church (1 Peter 5:2b; Acts 20:28).
- e. Manage the spiritual, physical and financial needs of Christ's church (1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 11:30).
- f. Be Examples for Christ's church to follow (1 Peter 5:3b; 1 Tim. 4:12; Heb. 13:7).
- g. Read, Teach & Preach the Scriptures to Christ's church (1 Tim. 3:2; 3:16-4:2, 6, 11, 13, 16; 1 Cor. 4:6).
- h. Guard the Gospel of Christ's church (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14; Jude 3).
- i. Admonish (Warn/Correct) Christ's church (1 Thess. 5:12b; James 5:19).
- j. Protect Christ's church from wolves arising within the congregation (Acts 20:29-31) and those who would divide the congregation (Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; Jude 19).
- k. Restore and/or Cleanse the church through church discipline as outlined in Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; 3 John 9-11.
- l. Care for Christ's church (1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 20:28)
- m. Equip Christ's church for work in the Lord's Service (Eph. 4:12)

3. Appointment of An Elder

The Elders will lead the congregation in the Appointment of any Elder.

In order to reduce the length of the Church Rules, the Elders have created a separate booklet that contains the detailed process involved with appointing both, a NON-occupational Elder and an Occupational Elder.

a. Appointing a Non-Occupational Elder • The 3-Step Process

- 1). Step #1 – A qualified man is recommended to GBCR'S existing Elders
- 2). Step #2 – The PRIVATE Evaluation Process for a Non-Occupational Elder
- 3). STEP #3 – The PUBLIC Evaluation Process for a Non-Occupational Elder

b. Appointing An Occupational Elder • The 7-Step Process

- 1). Step #1 – PRAY
- 2). Step #2 – GET COUNSEL
- 3). Step #3 – GET INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS
- 4). Step #4 – ELDERS' EVALUATION OF THE CANDIDATE
- 5). Step #5 – THE REQUIRED UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATION OF ELDERS
- 6). Step #6 – THE REQUIRED MAJORITY VOTE OF GBCR'S MEMBERS
- 7). Step #7 – THE ELDERS EXTEND INVITATION TO APPROVED CANDIDATE

4. Annual Check-Up of the Elders

- a. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health of each Elder is the primary goal of this annual check-up.
- b. Each year every Elder will participate in this Annual Check-Up individually and collectively with his fellow-elders.

- c. This is not an event the other members of the congregation will participate in unless requested by the existing elders. However, it is important that each member pray for the elders as they seek to healthy in all respects enough to carry out the responsibilities of the elders found in these rules.
- d. The Elders will develop a suitable Questionnaire for their Annual Check-Up and complete at an agreed-upon time once a year.

5. Resignation and/or Removal of an Elder

- a. An Elder may resign from office via Letter of Resignation
 - 1). His resignation from the office of elder does not automatically remove him from being a member of GBCR.
 - 2). If an Elder desires to resign from his office and leave the membership of the church in good standing, he needs to make this clear in his letter.
 - 3). If any elder or any member is under church discipline and seeks to resign from his office and/or his church members in order to avoid church discipline, the elders have the right to refuse the letter of resignation until the matter is resolved biblically, to the satisfaction of the elders.
- b. An Elder is obviously removed from office when he dies.
- c. An Elder can be removed from office and potentially removed from church members via Church Discipline.
- d. An Elder is removed from office if GBCR is legally and permanently closed through the process outlined by the Charity Commission.

B. Our Church Servants - The Deacons

1. Relationship Between the Elders & The Deacons

- a. The Elders and The Deacons should have a strong, unified relationship with one another that is not adversarial or demeaning.
- b. In some churches, the deacons and the pastor are the decision-makers, but at GBCR, the Elders alone are the decision-makers and the deacons serve as assistants to the elders.

2. Biblical Qualifications Required in Order to Serve as a Deacon

These necessary biblical qualifications are found in **1 Timothy 3:8-13**.

3. Responsibilities of the Deacons

Deacons practically assist the Elders in whatever practical needs exist in the church. In this regard, Deacons have delegated authority for particular jobs assigned to them by the elders.

4. Appointment of the Deacons

The Elders will lead the congregation in the Appointment of any Deacon.

In order to reduce the length of the Church Rules, the Elders have created a separate booklet that contains the detailed process involved with appointing a Deacon.

A Summary of that booklet is provided in the **3-Step Process** of Appointing a Deacon below:

- a. **Step #1** – A man is officially recommended to GBCR’S existing Elders to be a candidate.
- b. **Step #2** - Pre-Appointment Evaluation of the candidate by GBCR’S Elders.
- c. **Step #3** - Elders Affirmation of a New Deacon

5. Annual Check-Up of the Deacons

- a. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health of each Deacon is the primary goal of this annual check-up.
- b. Each year every Deacon will participate in this Annual Check-Up which will be conducted by the Elders.
- c. This is not an event the other members of the congregation will participate in unless requested by the existing elders. However, it is important that each member pray for the deacons as they seek to be healthy in all respects, in order to carry out their responsibilities as assistants to the elders in caring for the church.
- d. The Elders will develop a suitable Questionnaire for the deacons’ Annual Check-Up and lead the Deacons in its completion once a year.

6. Resignation and/or Removal of the Deacons

- a. A Deacon may resign from office via Letter of Resignation
 - 1). His resignation from the office of a deacon does not automatically remove him from being a member of GBCR.
 - 2). If a Deacon desires to resign from his office and leave the membership of the church in good standing, he needs to make this clear in his letter.
 - 3). If any Deacon or any member is under church discipline and seeks to resign from his office and/or his church members in order to avoid church discipline, the elders have the right to refuse the letter of resignation until the matter is resolved biblically, to the satisfaction of the elders.
- b. A Deacon is obviously removed from office when he dies.
- c. A Deacon can be removed from office and potentially removed from church members via Church Discipline.
- d. A Deacon is removed from office if GBCR is legally and permanently closed through the process outlined by the Charity Commission.

C. Our Church Members

1. PRE-REQUISITES for Becoming a Church Member
 - a. Admission to GBCR's church membership is granted on an individual basis.
 - b. Each applicant must have a credible testimony of faith in Christ affirmed by the elders.
 - c. Each applicant must have been baptized by immersion after their salvation.
 - d. If an applicant is physically unable to be baptized by immersion due to a legitimate *physical* or *medical* condition, then the elders have the right to grant membership to those individuals in those extremely rare cases.
2. Pathway to Becoming a Church Member
 - a. Rather than require attendance at a 12-14 Week New Members Class or require a mandatory 6-months "Getting to Know You" period, the Elders have created a robust New Members Process called, "**The Pathway to Membership**."
 - b. "**The Pathway To Membership**" booklet explains in detail, the PRE-REQUISITES & PROCESS for becoming a member at GBCR.
 - c. **The Pathway to Membership** has 4 PARTS:
 - 1). Part 1 – The Documents
 - 2). Part 2 – The Interview
 - 3). Part 3 – The Church
 - 4). Part 4 – The Welcome
 - d. **The Pathway to Membership** is available upon request from the elders or the deacons.
3. Opportunities for Church Members include:
 - a. Serving in GBCR's growing list of ministries.
 - b. Regularly participating at the Lord's Supper.
 - c. Participating in GBCR's evangelistic outreaches.
 - d. Receiving faithful teaching from God's Word.
 - e. Seeking spiritual growth via discipleship training.
 - f. Receiving prioritized pastoral care, counseling and visitation.
 - g. Directly supporting church planting and the Great Commission.
 - h. Members having opportunity to individually offer helpful ministry suggestions & ideas to the Elders for the benefit of the church.
 - 1). The member's helpful ministry suggestions & ideas shared with the Elders are not to be offered as "demands upon the elders."
 - 2). The Elders are not obligated to implement any idea given to them.

4. Responsibilities of Church Members

- a.** Each Church Member must have and demonstrate a commitment to resolving disagreements and conflicts within the church following the relevant biblical passages.
 - 1).** Being quick to biblically repent and quick to biblically forgive and be reconciled is what each church member agrees to pursue.
 - 2).** Creating divisions in the church over disagreements or conflicts with others within the membership of the church is sinful and will be treated as such.
 - 3).** Refusing to repent, refusing to forgive, refusing to be biblically reconciled to a brother or sister in the membership of GBCR is sinful and will be treated as such.
- b.** Each Church Member must faithfully commit to sharing their lives (fellowship) and practicing the “One-Anothers” of Scripture. Each Church Member agrees to:
 - 1).** Faithfully maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace (Eph. 4:3).
 - 2).** Faithfully identify & exercise their spiritual gifts in the church (1 Pet. 4:10).
 - 3).** Faithfully obey and submit to the elders of the church (Heb. 13:17).
 - 4).** Faithfully pray for one another (James 5:16).
 - 5).** Faithfully give & receive admonition with meekness and in love (Rom. 15:14).
 - 6).** Faithfully forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
 - 7).** Faithfully attend the church services (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25).
 - 8).** Faithfully serve in the church (Eph. 4:16; Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:10).
 - 9).** Faithfully share the Gospel with the unsaved (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 3:15).
 - 10).** Faithfully support the ministry of the church financially (2 Cor. 9:6-7).
 - 11).** Faithfully pursue holiness / Christlikeness (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2-3).

5. Contact List of Church Members

- a.** This roll is the current list of GBCR’s church membership.
- b.** This membership roll is kept by the elders of GBCR and is usually updated by the elders after receiving new members or removing former members from the membership roll.
- c.** A “contact list” of GBCR’s membership will be made available for GBCR’s Members.

6. Official Meetings of Church Members

- a.** GBCR’s Church Membership Meetings are limited to GBCR members only unless the elders agree otherwise. At the elders’ discretion, crèche-age children of GBCR members may be allowed to attend GBCR’s members’ meeting.
- b.** The Purposes for our Church Membership Meetings is so that members...
 - 1).** May receive information on the life and ministry of the church from the elders.
 - 2).** May ask the elders questions about the life and ministry of the church.
 - 3).** Items for Any Other Business (AOB) must be given to the elders two weeks before the members’ meeting.

- 4). After reviewing each question, the elders will determine whether to answer that question privately (between the elders and the individual member) or to answer that question corporately at the next or subsequent members' meeting.

c. Infrequent Voting of Church Members at GBCR

- 1). As an elder-led church there is very little membership voting. For example, there is no congregational vote to receive a person into membership and there is no congregational vote to remove a person from membership. The Elders perform this responsibility.
- 2). The Elders are happy to receive the Members' concerns, offer suggestions, ideas, solutions to problems, etc. though the final decision on all ideas and suggestions given by the Church Members rests with the Elders.
- 3). One of the primary times a church member will exercise a vote is in the calling of a new occupational elder (aka The Pastor). Members in good standing, who are faithfully attending the church and are 18-years old or older will be allowed to participate in the vote to call a new occupational Elder (aka The Pastor).

7. Resignation and/or Removal of a Church Member

- a. A Member may resign from membership via Letter of Resignation to the Elders.
 - 1). The letter of resignation should include their reason(s) for their resignation.
 - 2). If a member is under church discipline, the Elders have the right to refuse the member's letter of resignation until that member has biblically resolved the issues to the satisfaction of the Elders.
 - 3). These letters of resignation will usually NOT be read to the Membership, though, if the elders reserve the right to read any letter if they choose.
- b. A Member is obviously removed from membership when he/she dies.
- c. A Member can be removed from Membership by the Elders via the process of Biblical Church Discipline.
- d. A Member is removed from Membership if GBCR is legally and permanently closed through the process outlined by the Charity Commission.
- e. There is no congregational voting for removing a member from Membership. This is the responsibility of the Elders.

D. Our Church Trustees

1. Qualifications of a Church Trustee

These qualifications are contained the GBCR'S CIO Constitution.
See the Elders for more details

2. Responsibilities of a Church Trustee

The Church Trustees assist the Elders with legal matters concerning the church.

3. Appointment of a Church Trustee

- a.** Recommendation for Church Trustees can be made by any church member in good standing.
- b.** Pre-Appointment Evaluation of Church Trustees takes place by the Elders and the details of this evaluation are determined by the Elders.
- c.** Elders Affirmation of a Church Trustee is done privately by the Elders, though the title and role of a Church Trustee is not intended to be kept a secret to the Membership.

4. A Church Trustee's Relationship to the Elders

- a.** A Trustee is subordinate to the Elders and must submit to the Elders
- b.** A Trustee is appointed by & removed by the Elders.

5. Annual Check-Up of a Church Trustee

The Elders will create an Annual Review, similar to the Annual Review that the Elders and Deacons need to complete.

6. Resignation and/or Removal of a Church Trustee

- a.** A Trustee may resign from office via Letter of Resignation submitted to the Elders.
 - 1).** His resignation from the office of a church trustee does not automatically remove him from being a member of GBCR.
 - 2).** If a Trustee desires to resign from his office and leave the membership of the church in good standing, he needs to make this clear in his letter.
 - 3).** If any Trustee or any member is under church discipline and seeks to resign from his office and/or his church members in order to avoid church discipline, the elders have the right to refuse the letter of resignation until the matter is resolved biblically, to the satisfaction of the elders.
- b.** A Trustee is obviously removed from office when he dies.
- c.** A Trustee is removed from office if he no longer meets the legal requirements set by the Charity Commission to serve as a Trustee.
- d.** A Trustee can be removed from office and potentially removed from church members by the Elders via Church Discipline.
- e.** A Trustee is removed from office if GBCR is legally and permanently closed through the process outlined by the Charity Commission.

V. The DISCIPLINE of Our Church

GBCR practices church discipline in accordance with Scripture. GBCR practices church discipline because Jesus Christ commanded it, created it and continues to practice in His constant leadership of the church from Heaven (see Revelation chapters 1-3). Church Discipline could be applied to any unrepentant member of GBCR, including any of the elders, deacons, trustees. Even unrepentant regular-attenders-non-members can be disciplined and prevented from attending the church.

Some of the key Bible passages informing us about church discipline include but are not limited to: Matt. 18:15-17; Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 17:3-4; Acts 20:28-30; Rom. 16:17-19; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:17; Titus 3:10-11; Gal. 5:19-21; 3 John vv 9-11; Rev. 2:14-16, 20, 24 and James 5:19-20.

GBCR has a sermon series on biblical church discipline and should be referred to as a supplement to these rules. Of course, if any member has any questions about biblical church discipline they can discuss their questions with any of the Elders for help.

A. The PURPOSES for Church Discipline

1. TO GLORIFY GOD

The primary purpose for church discipline and everything else Believers do in this Christian life is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9).

2. TO RESTORE THE REPENTANT

A second important purpose for church discipline is to restore a sinning member to a right relationship with God and with one another in the church (Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).

3. TO PURIFY THE CHURCH

A third important purpose for church discipline is to purify the church from open, known sin of its members (1 Cor. 5).

4. TO PROTECT THE CHURCH

- a. The church must be protected from open, unrepentant sin of its members (1 Cor. 5:11-13; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 2:14-16, 20, 24).
- b. The church must be protected from overt doctrinal errors (Gal. 2:11-13; James 5:19-20; 1 Tim. 1:19-20 & 2 Tim. 2:17).
- c. The church must be protected from unrepentant, divisive people (Rom. 16:17-19; Titus 3:10-11).
- d. The church must be protected from unrepentant abusive church leaders (3 John vv. 9-11)

B. The PROCEDURE of Church Discipline

Depending on the scenario and circumstances, the procedure of Church Discipline will vary. The Elders can advise if there are difficulties in determining the proper procedure in a given scenario.

1. The **NORMAL** Procedure of Church Discipline

The normal procedure of church discipline is based on the more common occurrence of one Believer privately sinning against another Believer. This step involves two believers regardless of their relationship with one another (ie. Husband and wife, etc) or their role in the church (Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Ministry Leaders or members).

In addition to Matt. 18:15-17, the biblical instructions found in Matt. 7:3-5 and Galatians 6:1 should be carefully read and followed by those seeking the restoration of the offending person or persons.

- a. **Step #1** – **Matt. 18:15** – *“Go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”*
- b. **Step #2** – **Matt. 18:16** – *“If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”*
- c. **Step #3** – **Matt. 18:17a** – *“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.”*
- d. **Step #4** – **Matt. 18:17b** – *“If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector”* – (This is excommunication & includes the removal of membership from the church by Elders).

2. The **OTHER** Procedures of Church Discipline

The “Other Procedures” of Church Discipline are based on different scenarios and varying circumstances to which Scripture speaks directly or by principle.

- a. **Scenario #1** – *A Member is caught sinning in the presence of a Member*

Biblical Response

- 1). The non-sinching member begins with a heart-searching, prayerful reading and responding to Matt. 7:3-5 & Gal. 6:1.
- 2). The non-sinching members then proceeds to go to his/her brother or sister and “show him/her” their “fault” in obedience to **Step #1** of Matt. 18:15-17.
- 3). The process continues until the sinning member repents or is later removed from the membership from the church due to refusing to repent.

- b. **Scenario #2** – *A Member is caught sinning in the presence of more than one Member*

Biblical Response

- 1). The non-sinching members begin with a heart-searching, prayerful reading and responding to Matt. 7:3-5 & Gal. 6:1.
- 2). Because the sin was committed in the sight of more than one member, the witnessing members can proceed immediately to **Step #2** found in Matt. 18:16 in confronting the sinning member.
- 3). The process continues until the sinning member repents or is later removed from the membership from the church due to refusing to repent.

c. **Scenario #3** – *A Member sins publicly and the Membership becomes aware of it*

Biblical Response

- 1). The non-sinning members begin with a heart-searching, prayerful reading and responding to Matt. 7:3-5 & Gal. 6:1.
- 2). Because of the public nature of the sin in this scenario, the church can immediately begin **Step #3** found in Matt. 18:17a. Here the whole of the church membership participate in calling the sinning member to repent.
 - If the sinning member is immediately and genuinely repentant, then the whole church is called to forgive and restore (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1; 2 Cor. 2:5-8).
- 3). However, according to 1 Cor. 5:13, some public sins call for the church to move immediately to **Step #4** of Matt. 18:17b in excommunicating and removing the unrepentant person from the church membership, thus skipping **Steps #1-#3**.
- 4). The process continues until the sinning member repents or is later removed from the membership from the church due to refusing to repent.

d. **Scenario #4** – *A Member sins and is considered divisive by the Elders.*

Biblical Response

- 1). The Elders begin with a heart-searching, prayerful reading and responding to Matt. 7:3-5 & Gal. 6:1.
- 2). The Elders must discuss and unanimously agree that this is not some small personal difference of opinion, but is indeed the outworking of an unyielding, unrepentant, self-willed, divisive person.
- 3). In obedience to the biblical commands of Romans 16:17-18 and Titus 3:10-11, the Elders are to mark and then warn the divisive person, pleading with them to repent, up to two times if necessary. If the divisive person refuses to repent, the Elders are commanded to “have nothing more to do with him” which includes the Elders removing the unrepentant divisive person from the church membership.

e. **Scenario #5** – *An Elder privately sins against another member.*

Biblical Response

- 1). The non-sinning member begins with a heart-searching, prayerful reading and responding to Matt. 7:3-5 & Gal. 6:1.
- 2). The non-sinning member then proceeds to go to the sinning Elder and “show him” his “fault” in obedience to **Step #1** of Matt. 18:15-17.
 - a). If the sinning Elder repents, then forgiveness and reconciliation are to be granted immediately.
 - b). If the sinning Elder refuses to repent and is brought to **Step #3** – Tell it to the Church – **1 Timothy 5:20** says, “As for those [elders] who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.”

- 3). The process continues until the unrepentant sinning Elder repents or is later removed from the membership from the church due to refusing to repent.

4). **TWO IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER:**

- a). Some kinds of sins can disqualify an Elder immediately, but other kinds of sins, if repented of, do not disqualify an Elder from serving in his office.
- b). If there are any questions of spiritual fitness or qualifications of a particular Elder, the existing Elders will need to make that final decision.

C. THE PROTECTION FROM UNBIBLICAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It is a known fact from church history that church discipline has been weaponized by both abusive church leaders and rebellious church members. When church discipline is used in an unbiblical way, it does not glorify God, nor does it purify or protect His church.

In order to protect both the members and the Elders from misusing or sinfully using church discipline for their own purposes, it is important that the Scriptures be followed as closely and as carefully as possible. No Elder or member has authority equal to the Bible, so if the Bible gives instructions, those instructions are to be followed, if they have been properly interpreted in their context.

1. If any Elder, like Diotrophes in 3 John vv 9-11, disregards clear, Apostolic teaching, doctrine or instruction, in a self-willed rebellion, then that Elder is to be confronted with his “fault.” If he refuses to repent of living and teaching contrary to the Bible, then that Elder is to be removed from office by the unanimous remaining Elders.
2. If any member, brings a false or unproven public accusation of sin against an Elder, that person has violated 1 Timothy 5:19 which says, “Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.” In breach of 1 Timothy 5:19, that member bring a false or unproven public accusation of sin against an Elder is to be confronted and shown their “fault” in keeping with Matt. 18:15. If he/she refuses to repent then either that person will be taken through Matt. 18:16ff or if they prove to be a self-willed, divisive person, could be put out of the church after a second warning from the Elders.
3. In summary then, let any potentially abusive church leader or any potentially rebellious church member be warned that church discipline can and will be used against all those who seek to warp, distort or use it for their own personal ends, contrary to the biblical purposes we are given in Scripture which include: Restoration, Reconciliation, Purification and Protection.

D. The PARTICIPATION in Church Discipline

1. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 the Apostle Paul argues that the church in “One Body” and “If one member suffers, all suffer together” (1 Cor. 12:16).
2. Jesus commanded that “the church” be involved corporately in a sinning member hardened themselves and continued in their unrepentance (Matt. 18:17). For a member of the church to refuse to do what Jesus said in this situation is not magnanimous or gracious, but openly rebellious against Jesus Christ’s personal command.
3. If Step #3 of Church Discipline is brought to the church, then the members of the church are to lovingly and graciously plead with the unrepentant sinning member to repent of their sins and be reconciled to God and anyone else they have sinned against.

4. If **Step #4** of Church Discipline is brought to the church, then the members of the church are not to be ugly, stand-offish, or unloving to the unrepentant sinner, but loving and gracious in sharing the Gospel of Salvation with them, and praying for their salvation.

E. The PITFALLS TO AVOID in Church Discipline

1. If you have been personally offended, but no clear violation of Scripture has been identified, then you should not think of your situation as a church discipline situation.
2. Since we all sin every day and in numerous ways, we do NOT need to confront every sin that we sin in our spouses, children, friends and fellow church members. This might not only manifests a proud “I’m better than you” way of looking at fellow believers, but it is full of sinful pride. Our engagement in church discipline at any level, is a humble, obedient and almost reluctant participation. The person or people who may run around the church confronting everyone of everything they see as sin, might themselves quickly come under church discipline for unrepentant pride and even divisiveness.
3. Sometimes people rush to judgments erroneously or jump to wrong conclusions about what they have seen or heard. It is best to meet privately with those possible offender and ask questions before making a final statement involving “their fault.” **Proverbs 18:13** says, *“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”* Be sure that you have the facts straight, and your finger on the Scriptures that should clearly be included in the discussion. Be sure you are seeking restoration and reconciliation rather than something punitive or a winning of some argument. Some who have pursued others almost constantly have, like Haman, who was hoisted in his own petard in Esther 7:6-10, have had church discipline biblically exercised against themselves!

VI. The LEGAL MATTERS of Our Church

A. Process of Changing the Church Rules

1. These church rules are helpful in providing a basis for how GBCR operates, but they are not the Scriptures, and as such, are subject to be changed by the Elders.
2. Members can speak to the Elders about suggested changes to the church rules. These suggested changes should be put in writing and sent to the Elder so that the Elders can discuss the suggestions in an upcoming Elders meeting.
3. The Elders reserve the right to change any of the Church Rules at any time of their choosing, but they will make every effort to read the Church Rules annually, and consider a thorough review of the Church Rules every 2-3 years.

B. Process of Voluntarily & Permanently Closing the Church

1. This process is spelled out specifically in GBCR’S Constitution which has been submitted to the Charity Commission.
2. If it becomes necessary to permanently close GBCR, then the remaining Elders must consult GBCR’S CIO Constitution and follow the directions provided in that otherwise undistributed official document.

WELCOME!

Getting to Know You

Application-Questionnaire for Membership



GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY

GBCR'S MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

STEP BY STEP



STEP 01

THE DOCUMENTS



STEP 02

THE INTERVIEW(S)



STEP 03

THE CHURCH



STEP 04

THE WELCOME

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH | RUGBY

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please use Adobe Reader DC to complete this PDF Form Digitally. Adobe Reader is a FREE PDF Reader from **www.Adobe.com** and is available for Mac users or PC users.

Other PDF Reading Software may not read this PDF Form as it was create with Adobe Acrobat Software. Also, other PDF Reading software may NOT save the answers you enter into this form. Aside from using Adobe's Acrobat Reader DC, please open the PDF and enter a few answers digitally, the save and close the file. Immediately re-open the PDF file and see if your answers were saved after you re-open the file.

If you have technical problems with completing this PDF Application digitally, please context one of the Elders so we can help you.

Welcome!

Dear Friend,

Grace Bible Church Rugby (GBCR) was started in February 2013 by a small group of devoted followers of Jesus Christ living in Rugby. These believers envisioned a church in Rugby that was more committed to the Bible than to the traditions of men. They desired to be part of a church that faithfully, yet humbly, listened to and applied the teaching and preaching of God's Word to their everyday lives. These believers continue to devote themselves to being doers of the Word and not merely hearers. With over 14 countries represented in our growing membership, GBCR is an ethnically diverse, international evangelical church. The greatest thing about us, by God's amazing grace, is that we know and love Jesus Christ as our Lord and only Saviour. **We are not a perfect church, but our unwavering commitment is to be a biblical church.**

At GBCR we value the accurate preaching of God's Word, the Bible. Each week that we gather together as a church, we intend to open the Bible, read the Bible, explain the Bible and apply the Bible to our lives. Our primary kind of preaching is called: **expository preaching**. This kind of preaching seeks to "expose" the meaning of the biblical text. Rather than using the Bible to promote man's clever ideas, expository preaching emphasizes God's ideas, values, expectations and commands for humanity, and especially for His church. Being transformed by the Word of God and The Holy Spirit of God is the goal of expository preaching. We believe that the Gospel that truly saves is the Gospel that also truly transforms a person from the inside out. All truly saved people are transformed. Love for and obedience to Jesus Christ increase throughout the life of a truly saved man, woman or young person. **As a potential member of GBCR, you need to know that this is the kind of church to which you are making application for membership!**

If you have already read and highlight your personal copy of GBCR'S Statement of Faith and Church Rules either in digital-form (preferred) or in paper-form, then we invite you to complete this **Application-Questionnaire (A-Q)**. Up to now you should have learned much about GBCR through reading what we believe and how we function as a church. This **A-Q** is our attempt to get to know you a little better, and it constitutes a very important part of GBCR'S Membership Process. We hope to learn more about you personally, your spiritual life, beliefs, life goals, spiritual gifts, teach-ability and your reasons for wanting to join GBCR. AFTER you have completed this final church document, please email or give your highlighted paper copies to one of GBCR'S Elders. You can refer to the Pathway Overview for what takes place after your submission of the **SOF, CR and A-Q**. **May the Lord help you and bless you as you pursue becoming a member of Grace Bible Church Rugby.**

In Christ,

The Elders
of Grace Bible Church Rugby

SECTION 2

GETTING TO KNOW YOU & YOUR CHURCH BACKGROUND

In this section, please tell us about yourself & your church background.

If you **do not** have any church background, simply answer as best you can or write "N/A" = "Not Applicable"

1. Did you grow up in a Christian family? Yes No
2. Did you or your family regularly attend church as you grew up? Yes No
3. What kinds of churches (denominationally) have you attended in your life?

4. On average, how frequently did you attend church before coming to GBCR?

5. What are your **Top 5** priorities in life? List Below in order of importance:
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____
6. What are **the Top 5 things you want** from the church you attend? List Below in order of importance:
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____
7. How would you describe the kind of preaching you have heard at your previous church?

8. What kind of pastoral care have you received at your previous church?

9. Have you ever had a bad experience with a church or someone in a church? Yes No
If "Yes," briefly explain: _____

10. As a potential church member, what do you think are **the Pastor's** primary responsibilities to you and to the rest of the church membership? _____

11. As a potential church member, what do you think are **your** primary responsibilities to the Pastor and to the rest of the church membership? _____

12. In your understanding, what are the main differences between Pastors, Elders & Deacons?

13. As a potential church member, are you committed to resolving conflicts biblically? Yes No

14. Do you know the biblical commands for resolving conflicts among believers? Yes No

If "Yes," list the Scripture & biblical steps for resolving conflict among believers in a local church?

15. Do you believe that the local church should practice "church discipline"? Yes No

Please explain your answer from Scripture: _____

16. Are you currently "**a member in good standing**" at another church? Yes No

If "Yes," please tell us about the church:

Church Name: _____

Church Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Church Phone: _____

How long have you been at this church? **From** _____ **To** _____

17. Have you **ever been** under church discipline by another church? Yes No

If "Yes," please provide the following information:

Church Name: _____

Church Location: _____

Phone Number of Pastor, Elder or Leader: _____

18. Are you **presently** under church discipline from another church? Yes No

If "Yes," please provide the following information:

Church Name: _____

Church Location: _____

Phone # of Pastor, Elder or Leader: _____

19. Why did you leave your previous church? _____

20. How long have you been attending **GBCR**? _____

21. Why did you start attending **GBCR**? _____

22. Why do you want to join **Grace Bible Church Rugby**? _____

23. In what ways have you **previously** served the Lord in a local church? Please list them

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

24. **GBCR** has a "blended" style of worship in music. By "blended" we mean that we worship the Lord using traditional Christian hymns & biblically sound contemporary Christian songs.

What style of worship music best describes your preference? _____

25. Do you have any musical abilities that might be used to worship the Lord at **GBCR**? Yes No

If "Yes," please tick the boxes that best describe you:

Vocalist Beginner-Intermediate Musician Self-Taught Musician

Chord-Based Only Musician Classically Trained Musician I can read music

If "Yes," please tell us what instrument(s) you can play: _____

26. If admitted into membership, please indicate all the areas in which you might like to serve at **GBCR**:

Bible Teaching **Preaching (*Men Only*)**

Hospitality **Helps Team** - Includes Set-Up, Pack-Up, Sound Desk, Powerpoint, Video, etc.

Creche (*Women Only*)

Sunday School Teacher **Sunday School Teaching Assistant**

Worship Team - Includes instrumentalists, vocalists and administrative assistance with music

Creative Design-Team **Website Management** **Social Media Technician**

"OTHER AREA" #1 - _____

"OTHER AREA" #2 - _____

SECTION 3

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. Who is Jesus Christ? _____

2. How would you explain the Gospel from Scripture? _____

3. What does Jesus mean when he says, "***You must be born again***"? (*Leave blank if you're unsure*)

4. What do you believe about **the doctrine of Regeneration**? (Leave blank if you're unsure)

5. What are the differences between **Repentance & Penance**? (Leave blank if you're unsure)

6. What is the difference between **saving faith** & **non-saving faith** (cf. Matt. 7:21-23 & James 2:19b)?
(Leave blank if you're unsure) _____

7. What are "**The Doctrines of Grace**"? How would you define them? Do you believe they are biblical?
(Leave blank if you're unsure) _____

8. Do you think a genuinely saved person can ever lose their salvation? Yes No

Explain your answer from Scripture: _____

9. How do you regularly cultivate your relationship with God? _____

10. On average, how often do read the Bible? Daily Weekly Monthly Hardly Ever

11. Aside from meal-time, how often do you pray? Daily Weekly Monthly Hardly Ever

12. On average, how often do you share the Gospel? Daily Weekly Monthly Hardly Ever

YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

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- This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, text, or other markings on the page.

3. How has your life **changed since Jesus saved you?** _____

4. Have you repented of your sins and confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord and only Saviour?

Yes No Not Sure

If "Yes," **approximately** when did you repent? _____

5. Are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins? Yes No Not Sure

6. Have you been baptized by immersion AFTER you professed faith in Jesus Christ? Yes No

A. If "Yes," provide approx. date, church name & location of the baptism _____

B. If "No," please answer the following questions:

1) Do you have any physical disabilities preventing you from being baptized by immersion?

Yes No

2) Why have you not been baptized by immersion after you professed faith in Jesus Christ?

SECTION 5

UNDERSTANDING GRACE BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY (GBCR)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- | | | |
|--|-----|------------------|
| 1. Have you thoroughly read & highlighted GBCR's Statement of Faith ? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you returned your highlighted copy of GBCR's Statement of Faith to the elders? | Yes | No |
| 3. Are you in FULL agreement with GBCR's Statement of Faith ? | Yes | No Not Sure |

CHURCH RULES

- | | | |
|--|-----|------------------|
| 4. Have you thoroughly read & highlighted GBCR's Church Rules ? | Yes | No |
| 5. Have you returned your highlighted copy of GBCR's Church Rules to the elders? | Yes | No |
| 6. Are you in FULL agreement with GBCR'S Church Rules ? | Yes | No Not Sure |
| 7. If admitted into membership,
do you agree to submit to GBCR's Statement of Faith & Church Rules ? | Yes | No |

AFFIRMATION OF GBCR'S ELDERS RESPONSIBILITES & LEADERSHIP

8. In your own words, please explain your understanding of Hebrews 13:17:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 9. If admitted into membership,
do you agree to welcome the elders' loving spiritual leadership in your life? | Yes | No |
| 10. If admitted into membership,
do you agree to meet with, pray for and submit to GBCR's Elders? | Yes | No |
| 11. If admitted into membership,
do you agree to receive the Elders' teaching & instruction concerning church-related matters
such as is found in GBCR's Statement of Faith & Church Rules? | Yes | No |

SECTION 6

QUESTIONS FOR GBCR's "RIGHT-HAND OF FELLOWSHIP" CEREMONY

1. Will you take seriously your relationship to others in the body of Christ, striving to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace? Yes No
2. Will you seek to encourage others to grow in their love for & obedience to Christ in the Scriptures? Yes No
3. Will you teach biblical truth to your family and acquaintances as God gives you opportunity, with a desire to see them come to trust Jesus Christ and be saved? Yes No
4. Will you seek to identify & faithfully exercise your spiritual gifts throughout this fellowship? Yes No
5. Will you consistently contribute, as good stewards of God's blessings, such time, talent and money, in the measure that God prospers you, so that GBCR's ministry of spreading the gospel may continue locally and internationally? Yes No
6. Will you always be willing to both give and receive admonition and instruction with meekness and in love? Yes No
7. Will you commit to praying for the ministry here in this church, praying for your brothers and sisters in Christ, and praying for the lost who need the Savior? Yes No

****GDPR CONSENT:** UK Law requires your permission to obtain & store your personal details. By signing and submitting this Application for Membership & Questionnaire you are giving permission to Grace Bible Church Rugby to store your details for church purposes.

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____
First Name *Surname*

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____
Signature

DATE: _____

* If this form has been completed digitally, please email it to: gracebiblechurchrugby@gmail.com

OR

Simply Click this Button to Submit Your Application

* If this form has been completed via handwriting, please return it to **one of the GBCR Elders**.

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OVERVIEW

④

THE WELCOME

③

THE CHURCH

②

THE INTERVIEW(S)

①

THE DOCUMENTS



GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY

PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

We Are **GRACE BIBLE CHURCH RUGBY!**



* These 15 flags represent the 15 nationalities that combine to make up GBCR's ethnically diverse membership near the time of this printing.

Though we are from many different nations, we all know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and as such we are truly brothers and sisters "in Christ."

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