

## **DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES OF GBC**

*Note: Our doctrinal statement sets forth our beliefs in greater detail as does the London Baptist Confession of 1689, with which we are in substantial agreement. Both of these documents are subordinate to Scripture and amendable.*

### **WE ARE EVANGELICAL**

We proclaim the gospel that we are saved by God's grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone. We believe sinners are fully and finally justified the moment they believe in Christ and no additional obedience is required to maintain that justification (Ephesians 2:8-9; I Corinthians 15:3f; Romans 3:21-26).

### **WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS INERRANT AND SUFFICIENT**

We acknowledge the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. We believe the Bible, as it was composed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17).

We also believe the Scriptures are sufficient in that they provide everything necessary for life and godliness. (II Peter 1:21) The answers to human spiritual needs are contained in the Scriptures, not worldly philosophies or psychologies (Colossians 2:8-9).

### **WE HOLD TO A REFORMED VIEW OF SALVATION**

We are convinced that God is sovereign in salvation. He has chosen us before the foundation of the world solely based upon His grace (Ephesians 1:4, 11). Christ came into the world to save those whom the Father chose to believe in Him (John 10:11; Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 5:9). We, by nature, were totally depraved and would never have sought Him if He had not irresistibly drawn us to Himself (Romans 3:10f; 8:7-8 John 6:37, 44; 10:27-29).

We also believe that people are completely responsible for the choices they make. The gospel is freely offered to all. Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. (Romans 10:9-13; Acts 16:30-3) The relationship between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility is a mystery to finite creatures. Both of these truths are taught by the Scriptures and we wholeheartedly embrace them.

## **WE PRACTICE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM**

Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection and is only appropriately performed on someone who has made a personal profession of faith in Christ. Full immersion is the preferred method, consistent with the New Testament practice (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:10; Acts 8:36-40; Romans 6:3-4). *For further information see our booklet on baptism.*

## **WE BELIEVE CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN**

We believe that God has appointed a day when Jesus Christ will visibly return in glory to judge the world in righteousness. Unbelievers will be cast into hell, to experience separation from God forever. Believers will be raised with glorified bodies to everlasting life in fullness of joy in the presence of the Lord. We live in light of that blessed hope which comforts us in our trials and motivates us to holiness. We do not require members or leaders to subscribe to a particular eschatological system such as premillennialism or amillennialism (Matthew 24:36, 25:31; John 5:28, 29; Mark 13:26, 27; Romans 8:18; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 21:8).

## **WE ARE NON-PENTECOSTAL**

While we recognize every believer has been given spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:7; I Peter 4:10-11), we believe that revelatory spiritual gifts such as tongues and prophecy were foundational for the early church and are no longer given today (Ephesians 2:20; Hebrews 2:4; II Corinthians 12:12).

## **PRACTICAL DISTINCTIVES OF GBC**

### **WE ARE RULED BY A PLURALITY OF ELDERS UNDER THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST**

We believe there are only two offices in the church — elder and deacon. The elders focus upon the ministry of the Word, shepherding, ruling and prayer. While each elder has specific gifts and abilities, no one elder has more authority than the others as a “Senior Pastor”. The deacons are helpers and focus primarily on benevolence, stewardship of the church property, church finances, and logistics. We affirm the biblical teaching that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church (I Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 6:1-6; 10:17, 28; I Timothy 3:1-7; 3:8-13; 2:11-12).

## **WE UPHOLD THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS**

Every believer is gifted by God and should be active in serving Christ's church. We seek to equip our members to serve. We give our members a great deal of freedom in the exercise of their ministry gifts and encourage them to establish new ministries (I Peter 4:10-11, 2:9; I Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 4:11-13; 5:19; Colossians 3:16; II Timothy 2:2).

## **WE EMPHASIZE CONSECUTIVE, EXPOSITORY PREACHING**

We believe in the pre-eminence of the preaching of the Word of God, which takes a central place in our regular worship services. Our norm is consecutive, expository preaching in which the elder(s) preach through a book of the Bible from beginning to end. This method allows the text to determine the purpose, rather than the preacher, and gives the preaching ministry a biblical balance. This method also gives people the opportunity to see "the whole" of a book over a period of time in order to gain better understanding (II Timothy 4:2-4).

## **WE ARE DEVOTED TO WORSHIP**

We believe Scripture regulates what we do in worship. We are not free to add or subtract from the essential elements of worship that God has revealed. The focus of our meetings is not to please men with entertainment but to glorify God by worshiping Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24; Leviticus 10:1-2).

Like the early church we are devoted to the apostle's teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer (Act 2:42). We seek to offer a balanced diet of these elements in our morning and evening services. We emphasize the ministry of the Word on Sunday mornings. We celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday evening, except on the last Lord's Day of the month when we serve communion during the morning services. While there is congregational prayer during the morning service, we set aside an extended time for prayer during evening worship. We enjoy fellowship throughout the day before, during and after our worship services. We have a fellowship meal on the first Sunday of each month.

## **WE PRACTICE BIBLICAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Christ wants His church to be pure from sin, error, and division. The procedures we use are set forth in our church Constitution and By-laws (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Titus 3:10).

## **WE ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN WORLD MISSIONS**

The work of missions centers on the proclaiming of the gospel of Christ so that God will be glorified as people are converted and churches are established. We believe the local church is called to identify, train, send, and support missionaries. We have been blessed by the Lord with the opportunity to send two of our families to the Philippines and three families to Spain, with the oversight and most of the support coming from our local church. We also provide partial support to missionaries in Israel (Acts 13-14).

## **WE ARE EVANGELISTIC**

We seek to proclaim the gospel at every worship service. We encourage people to get to know their friends, neighbors, and co-workers and find opportunities to invite them to church and share the gospel with them. Our Sunday morning worship message is broadcast on local cable T.V. We also desire to reach out to the community around us through outreach programs through which we share the gospel with them and invite them to church (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8).

## **WE COOPERATE WITH OTHER CHURCHES**

We believe that biblical churches should cooperate, not compete. We participate in a quarterly joint worship service with sister churches in our area. We were instrumental in establishing the Fellowship of Independent Reformed Evangelicals (FIRE), which is a network of like-minded churches. *A separate brochure describing FIRE is available.* (II Corinthians 8 & 9; Romans 15)

## **WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS TO BE GODLY CITIZENS**

We have a Christian citizenship group which encourages the application of biblical principles to all spheres of the culture around us, and to all of life as citizens of this nation (Matthew 5:13-16; Proverbs 14:34; Deuteronomy 4:6-8). We pray for the salvation of our government leaders and that they will lead righteously so that we may be free to fulfill our responsibilities to God and our families (I Timothy 2:1-2).

## **WE HELP TRAIN FUTURE CHURCH LEADERS**

We regularly have several seminary students who worship with us. We have weekly intern meetings to train and encourage these and other men in our congregation as they seek to prepare themselves for leadership in the church. We also offer summer internships where they can receive hands on training and receive invaluable practical experience (I Tim. 3:10; 6:18; II Tim. 2:2).

### **WE SUPPORT AND PRACTICE BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (Romans 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God desires that he seek assistance from other members, and especially from the Elders who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; II Timothy 2:15-26; II Timothy 3:16-5:2; Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession to and seek counsel from each other and especially from pastoral counselors.

Counseling at Grace Bible Church is based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

### **We Are Supportive Of Families**

We want to train husbands to be spiritual leaders in their homes and to train parents to raise their children biblically. We encourage families to attend worship services together. We have Sunday School for all ages and we have a youth group. These programs are not intended to replace the training which goes on in the home, and parents are free to choose whether to take advantage of these ministries. Families from our church frequently use our building for home-school activities. We also seek to minister to the needs of our single members (Psalm 127:3-5; Ephesians 5:25-6:4).

### **WE MEET THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

We have home fellowship groups throughout the week at a variety of locations and covering various topics. We have women's and men's fellowships which meet regularly. There is also a college and career group.