

Constitution and By-Laws of Sovereign Grace Bible Church

Preamble

We the members of Sovereign Grace Bible Church (SGBC) do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be “Sovereign Grace Bible Church”.

Article II – Authority

The primary authority by which this church exists as an established ecclesiastical body is received from the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments and in all matters of faith and practice acknowledges no other. The church shall remain independent, recognizing no other form of church organization as being superior to the local church, believing that according to the scriptures God entrusted the local group of believers with the responsibilities of the ministry of the Gospel

Article III – Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by teaching God’s Word for the spreading of the Gospel, for salvation of souls, and for the training and edification of the children of God. To be a multigenerational, family integrated community of faith where families are not divided during worship but are ministered to as a whole. To teach the distinct roles of biblical manhood and womanhood God has given to men and women in the home and church; we embrace and celebrate these distinct roles.

Article IV – Statement of Faith

The Benefits and Limitations of a Statement of Faith

Although the Bible is the final authority in matters of faith and practice, a statement of faith can serve as an excellent summary of what we believe the Bible teaches. Many people claim to believe the Bible, yet disagree on vital issues. A statement of faith provides necessary definition. It also serves as a helpful teaching tool by providing a concise summary of biblical truth. We recognize that any statement of faith is a fallible, human attempt to summarize the riches of God’s revelation and should therefore be open to further revision in the light of Holy Scripture. The following is a summary of what is taught as Biblical truth at Sovereign Grace Bible Church.

I. THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true contextual and/or prophetic interpretation. The precise meaning is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical historical method of interpretation under the leading of the Holy Spirit (*John 7:17; 16:12-15; ICo. 2:7-15; IJo. 2:20*). It is the responsibility of all believers to give themselves to the diligent study of the word of God in order to be able to ascertain the true intent and meaning of the Scripture, recognizing that proper, accurate application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture always stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

II. THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

Genesis 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; Ephesians 4:5,6

III. GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

IV. JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; Romans 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

VI. MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created in all spiritual, moral, and physical perfection, with a rational nature, intelligence, emotion, will, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; Jam. 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, which is sin, 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. Man has no recuperative powers that enable him to recover himself, and thus he is hopelessly lost. Man will never seek after God on his own (Rom. 3:10-11), he is a slave to sin (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:17), spiritual things are complete foolishness to him (1Co. 1:18; 2:14), his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9) and will only do evil continually (Gen. 6:5). Therefore, man's salvation is nothing of himself, but wholly by the sovereign act of God through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:13; 6:44-45; Eph. 2:1-9; 2Pe. 1:1; 2Ti. 1:8-9; 2:25; Acts 13:48; 1 Jn. 1:8).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, his guilt was justly imputed to every man, and a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception (Rom. 5:18-19). 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).

VII. SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (Jn. 1:12-13; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; Tit. 3:5; 1Pe. 1:18-19).

A. Election

We believe 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 (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1,2).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezek. 18:23,32; 33:11; John 3:18,19,36; 5:40; 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, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40,44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not in any way dependent on any initiative of their own part nor 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; Titus 3:4–7; 1 Pet. 1:2).

We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom. 9:11–16). This sovereignty 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).

We teach that the Christian does not know who God has elected to salvation, so he is responsible to evangelize or share the gospel with as many people as he has opportunity to share with. God has established the Christian's duty and privilege to evangelize because He has elected some to salvation and He has determined to save sinners through the preaching of the gospel. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:13-17; 1Co. 1:18-21, 1 Thess. 2:13-14). The gospel therefore should be offered to all people indiscriminately (Matt. 28: 19-20).

B. Atonement

God's good pleasure to save sinners by a substitutionary atonement was founded in the love and justice of God. It was the justice of God that required the demands of the law to be met and His love that provided a way of escape for lost sinners.

The atonement is the only means for the salvation of sinful man (Luke 24:26; Gal. 3:21-24; Heb. 2:10; 9:11-14; 10:1-14). If there were any other way to satisfy the justice of God, it would have been rendered (Acts 4:12; John 8:23-24; 14:6).

The atonement made propitiation to God, reconciling God to chosen sinners by the removal of the wrath of God through the substitutionary work of Christ. The Scripture sets forth the atoning work of Christ as a propitiation (Rom. 3:21-26), a canceling the penalty of sin (Heb. 7:26-27; 9:6-15), reconciliation (Rom. 5:10; 2Co. 5:18-19), and redemption (Matt 20:28; Rom. 3:24; 1Co. 1:30; Eph. 1:7), thereby fully accomplishing its intended purpose.

C. Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the soul is quickened and divine life is imparted (John 3:3-7; Tit. 3:5). It is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the power of the Word of God (John 5:24; Rom. 10:13-17, 1 Peter 1:23). Having been regenerated, the sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, is brought to repentance and responds in faith to the gospel. (1Jn. 5:1; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29).

Genuine regeneration will manifest itself in fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct (1Co. 6:18-20; Gal. 5:17-25; Eph. 2:10) as 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; Phil. 2:12b; Col. 3:16; 2Pe. 1:4-11).

This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (2Co. 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:4; 1Pe. 1:3-5; 1Jo. 3:2-3). It is impossible for man to achieve sinless perfection in this life, but holiness will be the primary direction of his life and is the basis of his assurance (Heb. 6:11-12; 1Jo. 1:8).

D. Justification

We teach that the justification of sinners is an instantaneous act of God (Rom. 3:21-26; 8:33) by which He legally declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Isa. 55:6-7; Luke. 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 5:1; 2Co. 7:10) and confess Him as Sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1Co. 12:3; 2Co. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). 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; 1Pe. 2:24) so that our sins are forgiven, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1Co. 1:30; 2Co. 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

We teach that there are two distinct aspects of sanctification, the first one being positional and the second one being progressive.

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous, having to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition, and should not be confused with progressive sanctification (Acts 20:32; 1Co. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2Th. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; 13:12; 1Pe. 1:2).

We teach also a progressive sanctification beginning at the point of conversion by which the practice of the believer is continually brought closer to the position he enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Spirit, the believer is both enabled and compelled to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Rom. 6:1-22; 8:29; 12:2; 2Co. 3:18; 1Th. 4:3-5; 5:23).

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. The total eradication of sin in this life is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:20-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; 1Pe. 1:14-16; 1Jo 3:5-9). Hence, we do not teach a sinless perfection, but we do teach that the believer's life will necessarily be characterized by the pursuit of holiness (1Co. 5:9-13; Tit. 1:16; 1Jo. 2:3-6; 3:9-10).

F. Security

We believe 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; Rom. 5:9,10; 8:1,31-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:4,5; Jude 24).

We believe 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 excuse for sinful living and carnality (Rom. 6:15-22; 13:13,14; Gal. 5:13,16,17,25,26; Titus 2:11-14).

G. Separation

We believe that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

We believe 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 Savior.

We also teach that separation from any association with religious apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:17-24; Heb. 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a continual pursuit of holiness (Matt. 5:2-12; Rom. 12:1-2; 2Co. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Tit. 2:11-14; 1Jo. 3:1-10). However, a believer is not to withdraw in isolation from the world; the world is his God-ordained place of ministry (Matt. 5:13-16, John 17:15; 1Co. 5:9-10). Rather, he is to expose the deeds of darkness as one who is in the world but not of the world (Eph. 5:1-17).

H. Christian Conduct.

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Col. 1:9-10

VIII. THE CHURCH

A. General Statement

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

We teach the obedient submission of believers to the leaders God has appointed over them (Heb. 13:7, 17), the necessity of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2Ti. 2:2), the mutual accountability of all believers to one another (Matt. 18:5-14), and the practice of church discipline in accordance with the standards of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1Co. 5:1-13; 2Th. 3:6-15).

We teach the autonomy of the local church with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any external hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Tit. 1:5). Churches are to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the one true faith. However, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, each local church should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1Co. 5:4-7, 12-13; 1Pe. 5:1-4).

We teach that God uses the church as His primary instrument to accomplish His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12). He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5-8; 1Co. 12:4-31; 1Pe. 4:10-11).

B. The Leaders of the Church

We teach that the one, supreme authority for the church is Christ (1Co. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders or bishops, men called to the primary responsibilities of prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:1-4). The role of pastor/teacher is a specific function within the office of an elder (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11). Additionally, God has also appointed deacons to the operational and administrative leadership responsibilities of the body. Men functioning in these offices must meet the spiritual qualifications set forth in the Scriptures (1Ti. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; 1Pe. 5:1-5).

We also believe that because of the clear teaching of Scripture regarding the qualifications of an elder and deacon, these offices are restricted to men only. This does not mean that any man can be an elder simply because of his gender, but must also meet the rest of the qualifications as provided in (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9). Women are not restricted from all teaching but are restricted from both offices of the church where no clear example is given in Scripture of a woman functioning in those offices. Subsequently, women are to engage in other meaningful

ministries e.g. preaching the gospel to non-believers, which would include missionary work which is the call of all believers at varying degrees (Mt. 28.19; Act. 1.8; 18.24-26); assisting the leaders of the church (Rom. 16.1); mercy ministries (Jam. 1.27); teaching the younger women (Tit.2.3); engaging in teaching one another in the common body life of the church wherein there is no necessary exertion of authority (Eph. 4.25; Col. 3.16; Heb. 3.13); teaching children especially in the context but not limited to one's own home (2 Tim. 1.5; Eph. 6.4); exercising spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 11.5; Joel 2.28; Acts 21.9); engage in corporate prayers as well as assisting (but not leading) in congregational worship (1 Cor. 11.5; Acts 2.42; 4.27; 12.12). The list above is by no means an exhaustive list on the sphere of women's ministry. We believe that women who follow the pattern of Scripture will find an abundance of opportunity to serve and impact the world for the kingdom of God.

C. Spiritual Gifts

We believe that God has given the church many spiritual gifts for the edification of the body (Rom. 12.3-8; 1 Cor. 12.1-11; Eph. 4. 11-12). We believe that believers are given a great diversity of gifts making the body of Christ consist of believers with diverse talents, callings, and gifts (Rom.12). We believe that every member of the body of Christ is called to use his or her gifts according to their individual gifting, calling, and faith for the mutual edification of the saints (Rom. 1.11-12; 12.3-8). We believe in the Sovereignty of the Spirit over all things pertaining to the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12.11). We do not believe that the spiritual gifts should be a point of division or the test for Christian fellowship. (1 Cor. 13.1-2; 14. 40).

D. Ordinances

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:36-42).

1. Believer's Baptism

Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the visible demonstration of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to new life (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:11-12). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42), and is a pledge in the presence of God and His saints to live a life of good conscience before Him (1Pe. 3:21). Baptism has absolutely no saving merit or regenerative power; salvation is entirely the work of Almighty God in accordance with the eternal decree of the Father (Eph. 1:3-6), as accomplished on the cross by the Son (Rom. 5:9-10), and applied by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5).

2. The Lord's Supper

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes. The Lord's Supper is reserved for those who have been born of the Spirit of God and must always be preceded by sober self-examination (1Co. 11:28-32). The Lord's Supper is an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way in fellowship with His people (1Co. 10:16). However, the elements of communion are nothing more than a representation of the flesh and blood of Christ.

E. The Mission of the Church

1. Exalting the Lord

We teach that it is the primary mission of the church to bring glory to God. Therefore the corporate meeting of the church is for the exaltation of God in worship: expressed in prayer, music, and the reading and preaching of God's word (Rom. 11:36; 1Co. 14:23-25; Eph. 3:21, Psalm 150, Col. 3:16).

2. Edifying the Saints

We teach that the saints are edified through the means of grace by the instruction of the Word (Eph. 4:13-16; 2Ti. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17; 4:1-2), by biblical fellowship (Acts 2:46-47; Heb. 10:25; 1Jo. 1:3), and by the corporate observance of the ordinances (Lk. 22:19-20; Acts 2:38-42).

3. Evangelizing the Lost

We teach that Jesus Christ has given the church an enduring commission to evangelize the lost, with this responsibility extending to every believer. Biblical evangelism must involve both the spoken word and the unspoken testimony of a life transformed by the grace of God in Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 1Th. 1:2-10; Tit. 3:1-8; 1Pe. 2:12; 3:1-4, 15). We believe that the work of evangelism should not just be local but that we should endeavor to obey the great commission which extends the purpose of the church regarding evangelism to the whole world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).

IV. Angels

A. Holy Angels

We believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6,7,14; 2:6,7; Rev. 5:11-14).

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B. Fallen Angels

We believe that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-15).

We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Is. 14:13, 14; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9, 10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20) and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

X. Last Things (Eschatology)

Since no one knows the day or hour of the Lord's return, not even Christ Himself in His humanity (Matt. 25:13; Mark 13:32), the timing of the rapture of the saints at the return of Christ (1Th. 4:15-17) and the millennial debate between the various positions among premillennialists and non-premillennialists should not be made a test of Christian fellowship in and of themselves. While the fact of the rapture is undeniable, the conviction regarding its timing together with the millennial issue is subject to one's presuppositions and the particular interpretive principles applied to unfulfilled Bible prophecy. As such, Peter's instruction and admonition sets forth an important principle for the saints. When serious consideration is given to the return of Christ and the cataclysmic destruction that will characterize the impending Day of the Lord, the exhortation to Christians is sobering:

"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!"

(2Pet. 3:11-12)

A. Death

We teach the historical orthodox Baptist view of death, which is physical death involves a separation of soul and body with no loss of immaterial consciousness. The souls of the redeemed are made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23) and pass immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2Co. 5:8), while the souls of the unsaved are held in torment awaiting final judgment (Luke 16:19-26). We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2Co. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15). Believers shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the Day of Judgment (Matt. 10:32) and made perfectly blessed in both body and soul unto the full, eternal enjoyment of God. The unsaved shall be condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) and cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), where they will be cut off from the life of God, abiding under his undiminished wrath forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; 2Th. 1:6-9).

B. The Rapture of the Church

We teach the personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ (1Th. 4:16-17; Tit. 2:11-13) to translate His Church from this earth (John 14:1-2; 1Co. 15:51-53; 1Th. 4:15-5:11) and so the saints shall always be with the Lord.

C. The Day of the Lord

God will pour out the full fury of His wrath upon an unbelieving world (1 Thess. 4:15- 5:1-10; Jer. 30:7; Dan.12:1; Zep. 1:7-18; Rev. 14:13-16:21), and these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory with His saints and His holy angels to judge all those living upon the earth (Matt. 24:27-31; 2Th. 2:7-12; Rev. 19:11-21).

D. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

E. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

F. Eternity

1. The Eternal State of the Lost

We teach the view of *eternal punishment for the finally impenitent*. We teach that prior to the final judgment Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where he, the beast, and the False Prophet will be tormented day and night forever (Rev. 20:10). At that time Christ, who is the judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment, separating the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31-33). The resurrection of the unsaved to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment they will be committed, under the abiding wrath of God, to an eternal, conscious, and unrelenting punishment in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels (Matt. 7:21-23; 13:40-42, 49-50; 25:41, 46; Heb. 10:26-31; Rev. 20:11-15).

2. The Eternal State of the Elect

We teach that after the Great White Throne Judgment the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will forever enjoy fellowship with God and one another (Isa. 35:8-10; John 17:3; Rev. 21, 22). The Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then

deliver up the kingdom to God the Father that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1Co. 15:24-28).

Article V – Membership

Section 1 – Requirements for membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church. It is understood that each individual will have studied the SGBC doctrinal statement of faith and Constitution expressed in the by-laws of this church for mutual agreement and conscientious commitment. All members will be encouraged to attend any congregational meetings summoned by the SGBC. Membership is for any one 18 years and older who has been consistent in attendance (at least 6 months) and after meeting with the Elders to be made acquainted with the Statement of Faith and the Church By-Laws.

Section 2 – Forms of Membership

A. Regular – All who are received into the membership of the church on the above mentioned conditions shall be considered members in good standing until such status is changed by one of the conditions set forth in Article V, Section 4. Any change in the status of membership shall be determined by unanimous vote of the eldership.

B. Other – The membership status of invalids, Christian workers, and others whose relationship to the church involves special consideration and circumstances, shall be determined in each case by a unanimous vote of the eldership.

Section 3 – Procedure for Receiving New Members

When the board of elders is satisfied that an applicant gives a credible profession of faith and meets the requirements for membership, the board may accept that person as a member by a unanimous majority vote. The right hand of fellowship will be extended to the new members having met all the requirements above.

Section 4 – Termination of Membership

A. By Transfer – Letters of recommendation shall be granted by the eldership to churches which request them, provided the member in question is in good standing and not subject to or under discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated. Letters of dismissal shall be forwarded and given only to other evangelical churches. If the person in question is in the process of, subject to, or under church discipline and visits or requests membership in another church, the eldership will inform the other church of the person's status and the specific sins involved.
(Philemon 2; 1 Cor. 5)

B. By discipline – It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation, upon recommendation of the eldership, to exclude from this fellowship any person who persists in

holding false or heretical doctrine; or who obviously and persistently lives a life inconsistent with his Christian profession; or who lives in violation of the law of the land or public morals; or who walks disorderly; or any person who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of this church; or who habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of this church without just cause (Matt 18:15; 1 Cor. 5, 2 Thess. 3:6, 11, 15; Rom. 16:17; Hebrews 10:23-25).

Article VI – Officers: Elders and Deacons

Section 1 – General Statement

In accordance with the explicit and implicitly teaching of Acts 6:20-28; I Thess. 5:12; I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5; I Pet. 5:1-5; Heb 13:17 – we recognize that Christ is the head of this church, (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:17-18) and that the Holy Spirit chooses men (Acts 20:28) to have oversight over the local church. We realize that these elders must be composed of men who meet four practical criteria:

1. Spiritual qualifications:
 - a. Character qualities that evidence maturity in the faith.
(I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-8; I Peter 5:1-5)
 - b. Able to teach and exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.
(I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9)
2. Sense of call
 - a. Must desire to serve as an elder and have a conviction that Christ has called him to shepherd the local church.
(Acts 14:23; I Pet. 5:1-4)
3. Availability
 - a. Must give the appropriate amount of time in the devotion of this labor of love.
(Acts 6:4; I Tim. 5:17)
4. Must agree with the Statement of Faith

In addition, the Scriptures recognize the office of deacon comprised of spiritual men performing the necessary temporal functions of ministry. (Acts 6:1; I Tim. 3:8-13)

Section 2 - Elders

1. Called to their position upon the unanimous agreement of the board of elders and support of the membership.
 - a. When new elders are to be selected, the board will welcome suggestions from the church. The board will tentatively select new elders and announce the names to the congregation. If the members of the church have an objection to that proposed elder, they should present the objection to the board.
 - b. The board will appoint new elders by unanimous agreement and will confirm new elders by the laying on of hands before the church.
2. Terms – they shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

3. Duties – Perform the scriptural and necessary duties of the office, minister the Word and pray, tenderly watch over the church and spiritual interests of the church.
4. Termination:
 - a. Consensus of the board of elders, ratified by the church; OR
 - b. Resignation
5. Salary for an elder it wishes to salary shall be determined by the board of elders with church approval.
6. Each elder shall be reviewed yearly by the board of elders.

Section 3 – Deacons

1. Called to their position upon nomination of the church and unanimous approval of the board of elders.
2. Term – they shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
3. Duties – perform temporal duties of church administration or assigned ministry.
4. Termination:
 - a. Consensus of board of elders with congregation approval; OR
 - b. Resignation
5. Shall be reviewed each year by the board of elders.

Article VII – Church Government

Section 1 - Organization

1. The board of elders has vested in it all the powers and authority usually ascribed to a board of directors or board of trustees in a corporation and shall have authority to use these titles when necessary in handling corporate or civil matters. The church is incorporated under the laws of Wisconsin as a non-profit religious organization, and the officers of the corporation are stated as follows:

President.....Chairman of the board of elders
Vice President.....Vice-chairman of the board of elders
Secretary.....Secretary of the board of elders
Treasurer.....Treasurer of the board of elders

2. The board will elect from its membership a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer to serve one year terms, and may be re-elected. The duties of these officers of the board are as follows;

Chairman: He shall preside at all business meetings of the board and the church, sign checks in the absence of the treasurer.

Vice Chairman: He shall perform the duties of the chairman in his absence.

Secretary: He shall keep a record of the proceedings of all business meetings of the board and church. He may delegate another member to the care of taking the minutes and keeping up of the minute book of SGBC.

Treasurer: He shall receive, hold and disburse all checks, moneys, bonds, collateral or funds of any kind belonging to the church as directed by the board or by the church. All funds shall be kept in a bank approved by the board. The monthly administration of church funds may be delegated to another member of the church with the approval of the board.

Section 2 - Administration

1. The board shall oversee and direct the ministries of the church. It will appoint committees and delegate authority to carry out such functions as the board deems necessary.

2. The board shall administer and supervise the care and use of all the church property through appointed committees to whom authority has been delegated. The board cannot sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber any of the real property of the church without approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at the annual or special business meeting called for that purpose, notice having been given on two consecutive Sunday mornings immediately preceding the meeting. The board shall prepare a yearly budget and present it for church approval at each annual business meeting.

3. Business meetings:

- The annual business meeting of the church shall be held on the date deemed most convenient to the membership (preferably January or February). The agenda and proposed budget will be published prior to the meeting, but other matters may be considered.

- Special business meetings may be called for stated purposes by the board and must be called by the board upon written request to the board of at least ten voting members of the church. Notice shall be given from the pulpit on a Sunday morning at least one day preceding the meeting, and matters considered will be limited to those contained in the notice.

- A quorum shall consist of at least 50% of the voting membership at the annual or special business meetings.

4. Authority to Bind the Church:

The Officers of the Church are the only ones who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

Section 3 - Operation

In accordance with the direction of the Holy Spirit and the revealed Word of God, this body will function in a cooperative effort between the membership of the church and the board of elders. In all matters of church business the board of elders will prayerfully determine what they believe to be God's will by unanimous consensus and present its recommendation to the church for discussion, approval, ability and responsibility to express spiritual wisdom into any situation. The form of polling (i.e. formal ballot, open vote, informal approval) and percentage will be determined by both the board and the church.

Church vote required for:

- Expenditures in excess of one thousand dollars per item.
- Annual budget. (2/3 quorum)
- Election of elder from outside the fellowship (3/4 quorum)

- Salary and benefits of Church Officers
- Termination of Church Officers
- Any matter cooperatively deemed necessary
- Absentee ballots will be accepted with prior notification

Article VIII – Finances

Section 1 - General

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church.

Section 2 - Contributions

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum.

Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

Section 3 - Accounts

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church (or a member he has delegated) shall disburse these funds promptly according the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and not less than each quarter.

Section 4 - Disbursements

Before the annual congregational meeting, the Board of Elders shall obtain from the Board of Deacons an estimate of the needs of the several divisions of the work, and a prepared budget, detailing the proposed expenditures for the coming year. When this budget is subscribed to, it shall be considered on the basis for the current liabilities. No committee or board is authorized to make changes in its provisions, or to make unauthorized disbursements without the consent of the elders.

Article IX – Ordinations

Section 1- Recognition for Specific Ministries

It is our hope that spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. The elders may oversee such men for preaching, missions, planting churches, foreign missions, the military chaplaincy, etc.

When there is a prospective candidate for such ministries, the Board of Elders shall guide that person in his studies and preparation. It shall then call the elders and the congregation to examine the qualifications of the candidate. It shall look into the soundness of his conversion, the godliness of his walk, the soundness of his doctrine, the degree of his gifts, the extent of his

training, and the blessing of God upon his labor for Christ. The Elders shall insure that the examination will conform to the requirement of the specific ministry.

The eldership will take preliminary measures for ordination. The preliminary measures will include the input of all SGBC members to examine, pray, consider, as well as voice any grievances concerning the candidates under consideration for ordination. If the Board of Elders considers a man proven, he will be presented to the congregation for the office that he is qualified for. The congregation will have two weeks from the date the man is so presented to bring forth any issue that might disqualify the man for the office. If nothing is determined to be disqualifying by the Board of Elders the man will be appointed to the office. (I tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9)

Article X – Amendments

Changes in this constitution may be desired from time to time. To encourage amendment rather than to disregard its provisions, the following procedure is specified:

1. Any member (see Article V) may submit written notice of a proposed amendment to the board at least four weeks prior to the annual meeting or any special meeting of the church.
2. Amendments of the Constitution, Doctrinal Statement, or By-laws of SGBC are subject to the needs of the church, and subject to the unanimous vote of the elders.

Article XI – Dissolution

This church shall be considered dissolved when its membership concludes that it can no longer fulfill its hereto stated purpose of existence. In the event of dissolution, no donor, member, officer of the church, or private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any assets of this church. Any assets of the church upon dissolution shall be used to pay any outstanding debts. Any remaining assets shall be equally divided among the missionaries supported by the church at the time of dissolution or the assets shall be given to another church of like faith and practice, holding to theology which accords with and is within the sphere of the church's doctrinal statement of faith, or other similar religious organization that is qualified as charitable organization under section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.