

Picture(s) taken for PCO? Yes No

Interview Date _____

Status _____

Elder Initials _____

Redeemer Bible Church Membership Application

After reading this entire document (sorry it's so long, but membership is very important to us) and filling out the form below, please email our Executive Assistant, Diana Nichol (diana@redeemeraz.org) to schedule an interview with one of the elders.

These interviews are nothing at all to be concerned about. They're simply to get to know you and how to serve you best. It is also a time for you to get to know them and ask them any question you have about Redeemer.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Marital Status Married Single Widowed Separated Divorced

Spouse name and kid(s) names & ages (if applicable) _____

What do you do for a living? _____

SPIRITUAL INFORMATION

Briefly describe what the Bible calls "the gospel." _____

When & where were you baptized? _____

In what areas do you really hope to grow in as a Christian? _____

CHURCH INFORMATION

How long have you attended Redeemer Bible Church? _____

Are you currently serving at Redeemer in any capacity? Yes No

If "Yes," where & who is your leader? _____

What was the last church you attended, for how long & were you a member? _____

Describe your past church involvement _____

Why did you leave your previous church & do you need to let anyone know you've left?

PARTNERING WITH REDEEMER

Are you supportive of the mission, vision & values of Redeemer? Yes No

Any disagreement or concerns with What We Teach or policy statements? Yes No
(Briefly explain any disagreements or concerns on the back – This does not keep you from membership)

Do you have any reservations in submitting to the leadership of RBC? Yes No
(If you wonder why we ask this, please read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 and Hebrews 13:17)

Can you joyfully sign the Membership Covenant without reservations? Yes No

If you haven't already, do you plan on joining a Growth Group? Yes No In one

If "No," please explain _____

What ministry areas interest you the most & why? _____

If you haven't already, do you plan on serving in a ministry? Yes No In one

If "No," please explain _____

CHURCH COVENANT

Any Christian who desires to enter into a covenant with the elders, staff and other members shall be eligible to become members of Redeemer Bible Church. To believe in and live in accordance with this covenant is to be a member in good standing. Each member, by the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit and in expectation of receiving assistance from the elders of the church, covenants:

1. To seek in prayer, word and deed, to fulfill the mission of Jesus, as summarized by Redeemer's Vision and Mission statements and to help build, maintain and advance our Values.
2. To forsake all known sin and honor the Jesus you have professed a commitment of your life to in all things with the help of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God and other Christians.
3. To strive for the peace and purity of the church in both doctrine and practice and to fulfill the expectations (4 Attitudes, 4 Actions) as outlined near the end of the Membership Matters class notes.
4. To accept church discipline, if it is ever necessary, delivered in conformity with Scripture & our policy, and not to pursue legal action against any elder, deacon, staff member or volunteer in connection with the performance of their duties.
5. To walk worthy of the Gospel with honesty and integrity in all things both inside and outside the church (Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 2:12) so that the Name of God is not blasphemed by anyone with knowledge of our church (Rom 2:24).

MEMBER COVENANT

I, the undersigned, with the help of the Holy Spirit, covenant the following:

1. I am a Christian who has been saved from my sins by grace alone, through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. I have been, or intend to be baptized to give testimony of my identification with the body of Christ and in obedience to the Scriptures.
2. I have read the What We Teach document and affirm my full agreement, or my commitment to value unity with the church over being right should I disagree.
3. I have read the Statement on Marriage & Sexuality and the other policies and agree to abide by those policies, even in areas where I might have disagreement.
4. I have read and understand the Redeemer Bible Church Covenant. I agree with it and join in this covenant with the church.
5. I have read and understand the Redeemer Bible Church Mission, Vision and Values. I agree to support and accomplish them with my time, talents and resources.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

ELDER COVENANT

The Elders of Redeemer, with the help of the Holy Spirit, covenant the following:

1. We commit to affirm, teach, defend and abide by our What We Teach document and our Policy Statements in their entirety (Titus 1:9).
2. We commit ourselves to lovingly care for you and seeking your growth in Christ (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12).
3. We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the Scriptures (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18), which will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28).
4. We covenant to helping you in times of need as your needs are made known (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 2:14-17).
5. We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13 & 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
6. We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
7. We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1) to honor God and protect the unity and holiness of the church.
8. We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
9. We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church membership (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12).

For the Council: _____ Date: _____

WHAT WE TEACH

The Bible, the Word of God

We teach the Bible is verbally inspired by God, making Him its ultimate source in totality and in every word. Because of this one fact, these 66 books are inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts, the supreme authority in as well as the sufficient guide of all matters of faith and conduct, even though human authors wrote each book. We teach the Bible is propositional revelation (the mind of God expressed in words and sentences, not impressions or experiences), practice the grammatical-historical method and trust that with the illumination of the Holy Spirit we can arrive at the correct interpretation of any passage. We also accept the historical record of the Bible as accurate. The Bible is not a collection of beliefs; it is God's revelation of reality without which we can not know the Truth. In all areas that the Bible does speak it is true, accurate, sufficient, and in no way misleading. There is no truth that is inconsistent with the Bible. This means we reject all postmodern, reader-response, mystical, subjective interpretations that do not rely on the above controls and we reject the idea that truth or morality are merely relative or subjective.

The Trinity

We teach there is only one true and living God, who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each divine person equally deserves worship and obedience, and are equal in every divine perfection, though at the same time each executes a distinct, but harmonious function in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

God The Father

We teach that God the Father is an eternal, infinite, unchanging, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, knowledge, wisdom, faithfulness, power, justice, patience, love and sole authority over the entire universe. He created all things out of nothing, physical and non-physical, not because of any deficiency in Himself or incompleteness in His self-sufficiency, but for His own purpose and glory. We teach He holds His entire creation together, foreknows, ordains and controls all things, concerns Himself with and mercifully enters into the affairs of humankind, planned salvation, hears and answers prayer and adopts into His family all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, rescuing them from eternal, conscious torment.

God The Son, The Lord Jesus Christ

We teach the eternal Son of God, through Whom God the Father created the world and is currently upholding it, was prophetically predicted in the Old Testament, became fully human, being conceived by the Holy Spirit in a woman named Mary and was born Jesus of Nazareth. We teach that at no time during His stay on earth was Jesus anything other than fully divine. We consider His virgin conception and birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings all to be true and historical, along with His substitutionary, atoning, once-for-all-time death, burial, physical resurrection, ascension into heaven and perpetual intercession for His people. We teach His personal, visible return to earth in the future to judge the world and establish His rule over the earth. In light of all of this, we teach that belief in Him is the only way any person can or will ever be saved.

God The Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person with an intellect, will and emotions. He created and preserves the world, was heavily involved in Jesus' earthly life (His conception, empowering His ministry, at His crucifixion and resurrection), was sent by the Father and the Son in fulfillment of the New Covenant as Jesus' comforting replacement, the divine author and interpreter of Scripture, convicts of sin, restrains evil, brings glory to Jesus, grants new life to those who are spiritually dead, places all believers into the one true church, convinces them to repent and believe, indwells them permanently, gives them access to God, leads them away from and empowers them for victory over sin, transforms them into the image of Jesus, produces godly character, prays for them, gives them a ministry for the good of the church and protects them until the day of redemption. We have chosen not to take a stand in this statement on the continuation of miraculous spiritual gifts though each elder has convictions on this issue. However, we do not teach the gift of tongues (or any other individual spiritual gift) is required as evidence of salvation, or that any 'word from the Lord,' feeling, impression or message from the Holy

Spirit will ever contradict or supersede what He has already said in the Bible. We also teach the repudiation of the prosperity movement, which is often connected with miraculous spiritual gifts.

Creation

While each elder has a conviction on how long ago the creation event in Genesis 1:1-2:4 took place we have chosen not to take a hard stand on this issue in our doctrinal statement. However, we do teach a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3, creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), the special creation of a historical Adam & Eve, a historical Noah and a worldwide flood. We do not think there is evidence that persuades us to affirm species to species evolution.

Human Beings

We teach Adam and Eve, the parents of the entire human race, were real people who were created in innocence, without sin and with the capacity, desire and mandate to glorify God in all things. We teach that all human beings, whether in the womb or out, regardless of age or level of health, are images of God and are, therefore, inherently valuable and worthy of respect (thus, we strongly oppose abortion, embryonic stem cell research and euthanasia). We teach that in Adam's sin the whole human race fell, inherited the guilt of his sin and a sinful nature, becoming spiritually dead, enslaved to sin and alienated from God so that all are now sinners both by nature and by choice. We teach mankind is guilty before God, totally infected by sin and incapable of saving himself from his depraved condition, leaving every single human that has ever lived hopelessly lost and awaiting the unending wrath of God. This understanding of human beings leads us to reject any concept of universal salvation.

Men and Women

We teach that God created both men and women in His image, making both genders completely equal in value and dignity and equally worthy of respect (contrary to all forms of misogyny and misanthropy). However, they are not identical, but instead are complementary in both role and function. In other words, in the church and in the home, men have been given the responsibility of leading (e.g., only men should be church elders/pastors) and women have been given the responsibility of following that leadership. We teach that marriage can only exist between a man and a woman and marriage roles have always been part of God's good creation, being ordained by Him before sin entered the world.

Salvation

We teach that salvation is completely a gift of God's grace given to all whom He elected to salvation before the creation of the world. Salvation includes all that God does in saving humans from the penalty, power and presence of sin and in restoring them to a right relationship with Him. As such, we teach salvation is solely the work of God from initiation to completion, and that the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is the cause, not the result of a sinner's regeneration (also called, being born again). We teach salvation can never be gained by human good works, but is a free gift only for those who repent of their sins and put their trust in Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord, His finished work on the cross and His resurrection. We teach all who do so are united to Christ, and therefore, are forgiven and saved from their sins, declared righteous before God and are adopted into His family so as to bring Him glory forever.

Sanctification

We teach sanctification (i.e., growth, change, maturity, etc.) from sin has both positional and practical aspects. Positional sanctification as a work of the Holy Spirit is complete and absolute (a synonym for salvation); however, practical sanctification is a result of the continuing work of the Spirit using the Word of God as the primary means for growth into Christlikeness. We teach that while the process of practical sanctification is assured by the Word and the Spirit, it is imperfect in this life. There is some element of corruption in every believer after they are regenerated, which is the source for the Christian's war between the flesh and the Spirit. In general, spiritual growth occurs as believers grow in love for Jesus through the Gospel, feed on His Word and are in fellowship with other believers for encouragement and service.

Preservation & Perseverance

We teach all who have ever been regenerated are kept by God's power and thus, their salvation is secure in Christ forever. We teach this assurance, however, is not an excuse for sinful living; God in His holiness will not tolerate persistent sin in His children. We teach that true faith in Christ is expressed by a fruitful, God-pleasing life that stays faithful to that commitment until death.

The Church

We teach the true Church, the Church Universal, is made up of every person who has ever repented of his or her sins and trusted Jesus Christ to save them from God's wrath. Each local church, as established in Scripture, is made up of redeemed individuals who have joined together for worship, instruction, fellowship, service and to reach the lost.

The Ordinances

We teach the Lord Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and Communion / The Lord's Supper. We teach baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the triune God and is to be done after a person experiences salvation, never before and never to earn salvation as an expression of one's union with Christ in His death and resurrection. We teach Communion commemorates and proclaims Jesus' death. We believe these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Religious Liberty

We teach every human being can have a direct relationship with God, and is ultimately responsible to God alone in all matters of faith. We teach that every church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that, therefore, Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

Angels and Demons

We teach that angels are created, personal beings, and therefore should not be worshiped, who worship God and carry out His purposes in the world. We teach that Satan is a fallen angel, the enemy of both God and man, who took numerous angels with him when he fell and helped introduce sin to the human race. Satan and his demonic army, though they know the truth, are encouraging sin and false religion in the world and will all be eternally punished in the lake of fire.

End Times

We teach an imminent, physical, personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We teach that at death the souls of those who have trusted Jesus for salvation pass immediately into His presence and remain there in sinless, conscious bliss until the resurrection when soul and body will be reunited. We teach that at death the souls of all unbelievers will never be annihilated, but will remain in conscious misery until their soul and body will be reunited at the final judgment and cast into the lake of fire, separated from God in conscious punishment forever. We have chosen not to take a stand on many end times details (e.g., the timing of the Rapture, the start of the Tribulation period, how long it will last and whether Christians will go through it, the start of the Millennium and how long it is, etc.) though each elder has come to conclusions on these issues. We anticipate Jesus' return in the future, meaning we do not believe He has already returned.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Statement on Marriage & Sexuality

Assumptions

The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe as interpreted by our pastor-elders. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God and the final authority concerning morality and conduct of mankind. In light of this, we teach that the term “marriage” has only one meaning, which is that marriage was created by God and only sanctioned to join one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-5). In general, God hates divorce (Mal 2:16), but we teach He allows it only in cases of adultery or desertion (Matt 19:3-9; 1 Cor 7:15).

Sexuality

We teach God created sex as part of His good creation (Gen 2:24) and intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (Heb 13:4), meaning God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We love those caught in these sins and will always express that love by encouraging repentance (1 Cor 13:6) from any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, premarital fornication, polygamy, homosexual, bisexual or multi-sexual activity, bestiality, incest, pornography and any disagreement with or attempt to modify one’s biological gender. These and any other sexual activity outside of that between one man and one woman in marriage is sinful, an offense to God and risks eternal punishment (Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; 1 Tim 1:9-10).

Forgiveness

We teach that God offers forgiveness, redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin in these matters (1 Cor 6:11; 1 Tim 1:11; Titus 2:14; 1 John 1:9), seeking His mercy through Jesus Christ. We teach that every person must be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity; hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or group are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of this church (1 Cor 13:1-7, 16:14).

Integrity

We teach that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Christians and non-Christians alike, it is imperative that the church operate exclusively according to our conscience and convictions on these matters, and that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, must conduct themselves in accordance with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.

Statement on Church Leadership

The Leadership of Jesus Christ

The government of the church will be vested in the elders who shall be focused on seeking and maintaining the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all the affairs of the church. All those at the church with any authority must continually seek His mind and will, through His Spirit and the Word of God for all actions and decisions.

Pastor-Elders/Board of Directors

- a) In accordance with the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S) § 10-3801 (2015), corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of and the affairs of the corporation shall be managed under the direction of the pastor-elders who shall also be known as “pastors,” “elders,” “overseers,” “board” or “board of directors” as that last term is used in the A.R.S.
- b) The elders are the governing board of the church. The overall leadership of the church shall be vested in the elders, who are to be men only (1 Co 11:33-36; 1 Ti 2:11-14, 3:2; Titus 1:6) and are responsible for governing the church (1 Thes 5:12; 1 Ti 3:4-5, 5:17; Titus 1:7; Heb 13:7, 17; 1 Pt 5:2), proclaiming and defending the Bible (Eph 4:11; 1 Ti 3:2, 4:13, 5:17; 2 Ti 4:1-5; Titus 1:9) and shepherding the church (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Co 2:4; 1 Thes 2:7-8; Jas 5:14; 1 Pt 5:2-3).
- c) All elders must adhere to the Statement of Faith in its entirety, maintain the scriptural qualifications as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and be examples of the vision and mission statements as well as the church’s values.
- d) The elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function. Individual elders may or may not be employed by the church. Elders may choose the church officers, as necessary, which may include the Chief Executive Officer, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer from among themselves and determine their responsibilities. These officials must be elders, who may hold multiple offices and may look to other members to assist them in these duties.
- e) The board may select a male member in good standing to become a lay elder candidate who can attend elder meetings (without voting privileges) and start a process of training and observation that could culminate in becoming an elder. The board shall vote to retain current elders and elect new elders on a regular basis.
- f) An elder is free to take a sabbatical of up to one year at the discretion of the other elders and lay elders must take a one-year sabbatical after 6 consecutive years on the board. This should be a time of rest and study without the obligation of teaching and shepherding. Though this is a time of rest, the elder on sabbatical should remain a member in good standing and not forsake his own spiritual edification or supporting the flock with prayer.
- g) An individual elder, or the board may dissolve the relationship between an elder and the board. If the individual elder no longer works at or attends the church, or is in a state of unrepentant sin, or is under the formal process of church discipline, or becomes unable to affirm the What We Teach Statement or fails to remain qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, then he will no longer be an elder.

Statement on Membership at Redeemer Bible Church

Regular Membership

There shall be members of the local congregation with word “member” being a spiritual and theological term that does not have any civil effect. Members will consist of men and women a) who have repented of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, b) who give evidence of being born again by living consistently with their commitment to Jesus and with the doctrine and practice of this church, c) who have completed the membership process as prescribed by the elders. People who are in AZ only part of the year can be a member of multiple churches as long as the other church is like-minded.

Membership Expectations

A member in good standing is one who is currently keeping the church covenant.

Church Discipline

Church discipline will be strictly exercised in accordance with this article. Ongoing sin in the life of a Christian obstructs one’s walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship of the church, weakens our witness and ultimately dishonors Jesus. God’s discipline in the church is primarily intended to be positive, instructive, and encouraging, never punitive or done in a harsh, vengeful, or self-righteous manner. It is always to be carried out in humility and love, with the goals of restoring the sinning individual to full fellowship with the Lord and the church (Mt 18:15-20, Gal 6:1), protecting others from the harms sin causes (1 Cor 5:6) and showing respect for the honor and glory of God’s name (1 Pt 2:12).

Redeemer Bible Church adheres to the following biblical procedures for confronting ongoing sin:

- a) Step 1. Church discipline starts on an individual level. If someone has firsthand knowledge of ongoing sin in the life of a fellow believer or member, he/she should promptly go to the individual and confront him/her in private, encouraging confession and repentance, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God and those he/she has sinned against (Matthew 18:15). At this point, only two people should know about this, the one in sin and the one with knowledge of the sin. At every step in this process, love would dictate that those with firsthand knowledge of the sin should tell no one else.
- b) Step 2. If there continues to be no repentance, the one with knowledge of the sin should confirm the facts of the situation with one or at most two more witnesses and then they should all go to the one in sin to encourage him/her further to confess and repent of their sin, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God and those he/she has sinned against (Matthew 18:16).
- c) Step 3. If there is still no repentance, the matter should be brought to “the church” (Mt 18:17a). This should be done by bringing the matter to a pastor-elder, who will attempt to confirm the facts of the situation with the other elders and those previously involved. The sinning individual will then be given the opportunity to respond to the accusation(s) and, if substantiated, the pastor-elders will again call on the one in sin to confess and repent. If the sinning individual is an elder, the accusation must be brought to the board by at least two individuals in order to be received (1 Ti 5:19-20). If there is confession and repentance, the elders will oversee a process of restoration that is to be followed by the individual (2 Co 13:5; 2 Thes 3:6, 14-15; Titus 3:10-11). If there is no confession and repentance, the sinning individual will be informed the matter will be brought before the church (Mt 18:17). There, the church will be encouraged to reach out to the sinning individual in truth and love (Eph 4:15) to win them back.

- d) Step 4. After a short but reasonable period of the whole church pursuing the sinning individual, if he/she has still not repented of their sin, he/she will be excluded from attendance at the church (Matt 18:17b, 1 Cor 5:3-11) and their membership will be terminated.

Any person who has been excluded from membership as a result of church discipline may, upon confession, repentance and compliance with the process of restoration determined by the elders, be restored to full fellowship and ministry. It is essential that the entire process of church discipline be approached and carried out without gossip, in an attitude of love, concern, patience and humility, and must be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and the restoration to fellowship of the sinning person (Matt 6:14-15, 18:21-35; Luke 17:3; Gal 6:1; Eph 4:32).

Termination of Membership

Membership in this church may be removed from the roles in the following ways: a) by death, b) by church discipline, c) by inactivity – If the member has been inactive, through lack of attendance in the Church over a period of at least six months, membership may be terminated. An elder or staff person will make an attempt to contact the person and encourage them to reaffirm their commitment to this body. Should the member not respond, or in response indicate no desire to reaffirm their commitment, or reaffirm their commitment but continue to be inactive, their membership will be terminated – d) by removal – Membership in this church will be terminated upon verbal or written request of such member to any elder or staff person – e) by transfer – This church will issue letters of transfer upon the request of the church with which the member desires to unite.

Statement on Membership Necessary for Leaders

Based upon our convictions regarding membership, we have the expectation that those who are in a leadership role at Redeemer Bible Church are official, covenant partners of the church, expressed in a specific commitment to this congregation.

This allows us to operate from a common foundation, bringing unity and clarity through which we can grow and be effective. If our leaders are not unified in mission, vision and values we will inevitably face unnecessary conflict, confusion, and frustration as we do the work of the ministry together. However, a common foundation allows for a diversity of gifts to flourish and for the church to function as a body with many unique members working in harmony.

Who is Considered a Leader?

Not all leaders have titles. There are many individuals that shape our culture and influence lives at Redeemer Bible Church without formal recognition. What's more, God wants everyone to exhibit positive leadership at some point and in some context, whether in the home, at work, or in the church.

As it relates to this policy however, we are strictly concerned with those who are formally recognized by the pastors/elders of Redeemer Bible Church as leaders over specific aspects of ministry. This includes, but is not limited to individuals who:

- Lead Ministry Teams, Without Teaching
- Lead in Kids and Students, Without Teaching

Why is Formal Membership / Partnership Essential for Leadership Roles?

- Leaders, above all, need to be committed to the mission, vision and values of the church. Membership provides a means by which the elders can assess whether potential leaders are committed and on the same page.
- Leaders need support. Requiring leaders to be partners empowers them to do their ministry knowing that they are legitimately representing the church's leadership and have the full support and affirmation of the elders.
- Leaders need accountability. Requiring leaders to be partners strengthens the church's ability to pursue discipline should a leader begin to stray from the faith. This should not be taken as a threat. Rather, it should bring comfort to those who desire the church to be faithful.
- The church's elders are tasked with the responsibility of shepherding the church body, overseeing the congregation, and protecting the church from error, false teaching, and division. Therefore, teaching functions are for members only. When a member desires a teaching position (in Kids, Students, Growth Group leader, elder, etc.), they must sign our Teacher's Covenant (the pastor-elder/director/leader over the ministry you would like to teach in can give this to you).

Statement on Counseling

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives. Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from the elders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (Rom 15:14; Gal 6:1-2; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 3:16-4:2; Heb 10:24-25; 13:17; James 5:16).

Based on these Scriptural commands, this church encourages its members make confession to and seek counsel from each other and especially from our pastoral team. Each member agrees not to attempt to subpoena an elder or lay counselor in order to have that person divulge information learned through the counseling process.

We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction and is completely sufficient for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the elders 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.

Although some members of the church work in professional fields outside the church, when serving as elders or lay counselors within the church they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions should seek advice from independent professionals. Our elders and lay counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them as a sign of love and respect (Mt 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov 16:28, 26:20), invites confession (Prov 11:13, 28:13; Ja 5:16) and encourages people to seek needed counseling (Prov 20:19; Rom 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others.

In particular, our elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines (see below). Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- a) When a pastor-elder, staff, or lay counselor is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the elders of that church (Prov 11:14, 13:10, 15:22, 19:20, 20:18; Matt 18:15-17).
- b) When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious financial or bodily harm unless others intervene (Prov 24:11-12);
- c) When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to start the process of redemptive church discipline to promote repentance through accountability (Mt 18:15-20) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (e.g., Ro 13:1-5); or

d) When leaders are mandated by law to report suspected abuse (Rom 13:1; 1 Pet 2:13-14).

Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt 18:15-17). Therefore, except as provided in Article 7.5, an elder or lay counselor may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (e.g., 1 Cor 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (e.g., Rom 13:1-5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse. The elders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

Statement on Leaving a Church Well

The time may come when it is necessary for you to leave Redeemer to join another church. Because we value commitment and investment in the church, we believe strongly that the transition to a new church is a significant event. However, in our experience, few really do this well, which leads to hurt feelings, misunderstandings, unmet expectations, and a lack of unity in the body of Christ that dishonors Jesus.

We have compiled the five steps below in order to help you walk through this process well for the sake of your own health and the health of the Body of Christ.

1. Have a good reason for leaving.

The reasons that people leave churches are many. Some are good, some are bad, and many are hard to discern. Before you go, evaluate whether your reasons are good, legitimate and God-honoring. Ask yourself whether you are running from conflict or reacting to unrealistic expectations. If your reasons are good, go. If not, stay. If you are unsure, it would be wise to seek good counsel.

2. Communicate your decision to leave with the appropriate leaders.

If you're an active part of the church, leaders will need to know you're leaving. If you are serving, communicate it to your ministry team leader. If you are connected to an elder or church leader, communicate your decision to them. Personal communication is preferable to written communication, but make sure you communicate. Whatever you do, don't just leave without telling your leaders

3. Tell these leaders the truth about why you're leaving.

If you have legitimate reasons to leave then you have nothing to hide or worry about. If the reasons for leaving will sting church leadership, deliver it in the spirit of Proverbs 27:6, "*Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*" God expects us to "*speak the truth in love*" (Eph 4:15), which means there's no need to couch the real, sometimes difficult, reasons behind vague, spiritualized generalities. God may use your specific reasons for leaving to help the church. "Exit Interviews" can be valuable to leadership, who are accountable to receive truth with humility..

4. Appropriately transition or conclude your ministry commitments.

If you've been an active part of ministry, your role will need to be transitioned. Hopefully you've been developing somebody to take your place. But if you haven't, give your leaders an appropriate time to find others to replace you. You don't want to just drop the ball on the people you've been committed to.

5. Leave graciously.

Ray Pritchard writes, "[Leaving] graciously means you refuse to speak evil of those who remain in the church. Look forward, not backward. Focus on your new church, not your old one. Think carefully before you speak about your former congregation. Don't say anything that could be remotely construed as criticism. Even casual comments could stir up needless controversy. Let the Golden Rule guide all your comments public and private."

Conclusion

If you've read this material and realize you didn't leave a church well in the past, it you should make it right, apologizing not only to the leaders of that church but also to the people you may have harmed.

In the end, remember that Jesus loves the church you're leaving and the one you're going to — His blood was shed for both! Both churches are part of his bride. Do his bride the honor of leaving well.