THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Assimilation and Church Membership

We believe in the importance of serving the body of Christ by offering clear paths for people to start and develop healthy and growing relationships with others in the church body. We value an intentional plan to help every interested person enjoy godly relationships in the church. Church membership is a byproduct of people who are growing in Christ and who grasp the importance of serving the Lord by using their gifts to serve others in the local church.

Baptism and Communion

Baptism and communion are the two ordinances required in the church. We believe that Christian baptism by immersion in water is a public identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Although baptism is not required for salvation, it is commanded of all believers and is for believers only (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 18:8). Scripture shows that a person was baptized after personally receiving forgiveness of sin through accepting Jesus Christ. The waters of baptism are a symbol of our death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life that happens when we become new creations in Christ (Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:1-4).

Communion is the commemoration by believers of Christ's death, and a reminder—through the bread and the juice—of the Savior's broken body and shed blood. Communion is to be a time of confession of our sin and should be preceded by careful self-examination according to Acts 4:13; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29.

Charismatic Movement

Redemption Church is a non-charismatic, conservative, evangelical fellowship that welcomes all who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and all who are seeking Him. Those who claim to possess the gift of tongues and other sign gifts are welcome to worship and fellowship with us if they are willing to be a source of unity rather than division within our church body. We believe that the Christian life is supernatural and that the Lord continues to perform miracles. We also believe that current displays of the gift of tongues distract from the main task of the local church, which is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Current displays of the gift of tongues:

- Give unwarranted prominence to the gift, which is described in the New Testament as being only one of many spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12).
- Emphasize speaking in tongues as the primary manifestation of the Spirit's work in a person's life, while minimizing the Spirit's work in producing a holy life (2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Timothy 1:9), and a life that displays the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- Often suggest that speaking in tongues is a required proof of being Spirit-filled or of possessing salvation in Christ, even though the Scriptures do not teach this.

Redemption Church does stop short of saying that these gifts have ceased, but do require that if they are employed, it be done in private and not in any of the public meetings of Redemption Church. We do not encourage the use of "sign gifts," and instead, we seek to emphasize the more excellent way of love as well as zeal for the more edifying gifts (John 16:8; 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 12:11-13, 12:19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

Redemption Church seeks to prevent the propagation of doctrines that would cause divisions within an individual church. Therefore, members of and adherents of Redemption Church are not to propagate the teachings and emphases of the current charismatic movement. Although we do not

control personal, individual interactions with the Lord, the expression of tongues and other sign gifts are not to be overtly expressed at meetings that are under the organization and authority of Redemption Church.

Church Government

Redemption Church is committed to the Bible's teaching that men who hold the offices of Elder and Deacon are to oversee various functions of the local church. The Bible's teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Although there are three terms used for the offices of the church: bishop, elder, and deacon, analysis of these terms indicates that bishop and elder are used interchangeably.

Elder Qualifications (Titus 1:6-9)

- Above reproach
- Able to teach
- Husband to one wife
- Not addicted to wine
- Temperate
- Not antagonistic
- Prudent
- Uncontentious
- Respectable
- Free from the love of money
- Hospitable
- Manage own household
- Not a new convert

Elder Duties

The Scriptures show that the elders serve by leading and that their responsibility involves the spiritual oversight of the congregation. All elders are equal in authority but not necessarily equal in influence.
The elders' primary responsibilities include:

- Doctrine – Ensuring that the doctrine of the church is biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Board of Elders.

- Direction – Ensuring that the direction of the church is consistent with the Redemption Church statement of Mission, Vision and the Four Roots.
- Discipline – Administering in love and humility the process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-4; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-25; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Romans 16:17.

Plurality of Elders

The Scriptures teach that a plurality of elders governed individual New Testament churches (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). The Scripture does not mention any congregations featuring a stand-alone pastor and leader. A plurality of godly elders, exercising their individual giftedness, squares with the Scripture's teaching that wisdom is found in a multitude of godly counselors (Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 19:20; Proverbs 24:6). This truth does not eliminate the possibility and likelihood that one or more elders will stand out from the others as more public in their ministries or more influential in their workings on the Elder Board.

Lead Pastor

The Redemption Church Lead Pastor automatically serves as an elder and, because of his public presence and responsibility before the congregation, may be considered first among equals as a member of the Elder Board. The Lead Pastor should be gifted primarily as a preacher/teacher and as a leader.

Deacons

The Bible teaches that deacons lead by serving (Acts 6). The qualifications for elders and deacons are the same regarding an individual's character, but they differ in aptitude. The elders are to be able to teach while the deacons are to be able and proved as servants.

Deacon Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

- Individual of dignity
- Above reproach
- Not double tongued
- First tested as servants
- Not addicted to wine
- Spouses must be faithful
- Temperate
- Not fond of sordid gain
- Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
- Husband of one wife
- Manages household well

Church Planting

The church exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission, and in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 28:19-20, Matthew 22:37-38). The Great Commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made and grow in their relationship with Him and likeness to Him. God is glorified as we manifest His presence as we do His work (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31). In seeking to act upon the church's purpose, we recognize the extraordinary value in multiplying the reach of His ministry by planting local churches and by associating with existing, like-minded local churches.

Creation, Evolution, and God's Sovereignty

We believe God created the universe in six twenty-four hour days and that before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (Genesis 1; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16).

God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom, and supreme authority (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11).

We deny the theory of evolution, which states that nonliving substances gave rise to the first living material, which then reproduced and diversified to produce all living creatures. We believe that all people are descendants

of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

God rules over His creation and cares about and is involved in the lives of individual people (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25; Acts 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:13; Ephesians 4:6).

Eternal Security of the Believer

It is God's divine decision to save a person and it is God's kindness, forbearance, and patience that lead that person to repentance (Romans 2:4). All glory for the salvation and security of every believer belongs to God alone (Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 1:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9, Jude 1:24-25). We believe that everyone who is born again by the Spirit through Jesus Christ is eternally assured of salvation from the moment of conversion. This assurance relies on God's decisive grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works, and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation but indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18).

Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14), and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16: 30-34), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

Process of Sanctification and Maturity

Disciples grow in their relationship with the Lord by encountering God, embracing others and engaging the World. A person committed to a relationship with Jesus focuses on encountering Him, embracing God's people, and engaging in His mission. That person will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and, therefore, will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become "complete in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders' lives into others (2 Timothy 2:2). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church. We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Spiritual Warfare

Satan and his demonic servants viciously oppose the work God performs in and through His people (1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1-7; Ephesians 6:12). God, who by His nature is infinitely more powerful than Satan, in due time will have complete and total victory over Satan (1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10).

Although it is appropriate to pray in Jesus' name for protection against demonic activity, the Scriptures do not instruct the Christian to "bind Satan in Jesus' name." Rather, the Scriptures instruct the Christian to combat Satan by:

- Humbly drawing near to God, knowing that He will give grace, mercy, and strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:6-10).
- Resisting Satan's temptations (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9).
- Rightly applying the truth of the Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:24-27).
- Forgiving offenses (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).

- Putting on the armor of God's truth, righteousness, readiness to share the Gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer (Ephesians 6:11-20).
- Demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord by enduring trials (Revelation 2:10; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 3:9-10).

Sufficiency of Scripture

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that they contain all the words of God that we need in order to completely trust and obey Him. The Scriptures are inerrant in their original writings (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16), and are infallible in their instruction (Proverbs 6:32; 2 Peter 1:19), eternal in duration (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25); the final authority and the standard for faith and practice (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119); and sufficient for counsel in every issue of life (Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16). We believe that the very words of Scripture in the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic are inspired by God. Therefore, we believe that the Bible versions which translate God's Word most literally into modern English should be preferred.

Marriage, Gender & Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a natural born man and a natural born woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.) We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of

Redemption Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to our members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Redemption Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.) We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Redemption Church.

Women in Ministry

Redemption Church affirms the God-ordained and significant role that women should play in establishing and leading the local church. Every leadership opportunity is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. The Scriptures clearly state that men are to serve in the office of Elder and that women are not to serve in church positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men (1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9). We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God. The Bible is clear that men and women do not have the same roles. Qualified women should serve in any leadership position that is not forbidden in the Scriptures.

Worship

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37). All believing men, women, and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence. Worship glorifies God through adoration (Psalm 95:6), praise (Psalm 99:5), prayer (Daniel 6:10-11), thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46), and a complete yielding to Him (Romans 12:1). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage, and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Samuel 6:14-16; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12).

Several tenets guide our worship. We seek to:

- Passionately exalt Jesus (John 4:22-26; John 12:32; John 14:6).
- Lead God's people to lift their hearts and voices to Him, giving Him praise and thanks in music and lyrics (Nehemiah 12:45-46; Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 95:1-2).
- Prepare hearts to hear the Lord speak through the proclamation of Scripture (Psalm 95:6-9; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42).
- Emphasize fresh and contemporary expressions while retaining traditional elements that recognize the richness of our heritage in the faith (Deuteronomy 32:7; Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 46:8-9; Matthew 13:32, Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9).
- Pursue excellence in worship, knowing that God is worthy of our best (Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Psalm 33:3; 1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:4).