

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## FROM PASTOR MARK

What makes Gerri and me a married couple? What makes you and other Christians a church? In both cases, it is commitment. God wants married couples to be committed to each other and wants Christians to be committed to a local church. The analogy isn't perfect; but in both instances, the privileges and joys bring responsibilities.

- I. **BIBLICAL REASONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:** Membership in a local church is how we honor the commitments God expects Christians to make:
  - A. We need a Body where we belong (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).
  - B. We need godly leaders who shepherd us and that we gladly follow.
    1. They teach you God's Word (Hebrews 13:7).
    2. They watch over your spiritual life (Hebrews 13:17).
    3. They are specific to a particular flock (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2-3).
    4. When you "join" a church, you "submit" to a church.
  - C. We need accountability to guard us from sin (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:11-13).
  - D. We need a Body where we serve with our gifts (Eph. 4:11-16).
  - E. We need a People with whom we join in reaching out to those far from God (John 13:34-35, Philp. 2:15-16).
  
- II. **REQUIREMENTS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:** The Local Church is a Visible Expression of the Universal Church, the Body of Christ.
  - A. Church Members Must Be Saved (and Able to Explain the Gospel) (Acts 2:37-41, Mt. 16:19, 18:18).
  - B. Church Members Must Be Baptized (Acts 2:41).
  - C. Church Members Must Seek to Live as Christians Live (Acts 2:42; Titus 2:11-14; Titus 2:10, 3:8; Heb. 13:7, 17). This why churches have a Covenant. (See below. \*)
  - D. Church Members Must Believe What Christians Believe (Acts 2:42a, 1 Timothy 3:14-16). See the IBC Doctrinal Summary (Over\*\*)

## \* ARTICLE VI – IBC COVENANT

### Introductory Foundation

Having received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and having agreed to the Doctrine and Constitution of this church, we do now, in the presence of God and this Congregation, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

### Church Focus:

Therefore, we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will walk together in Christian love; will strive for the advancement of this Church; promote its prosperity and spirituality; will sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; will give it sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; and will contribute regularly and cheerfully as a faithful steward of our time, talent, and possessions, so that the ministry of this local church and the spreading the gospel throughout all nations will be faithfully discharged.

### Personal and Family Focus:

Also, we will endeavor to have personal and family devotions; will spiritually direct our children, bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord; will be just in our dealings, faithful in our promises, and exemplary in our conduct; will seek to abstain from all gossip, backbiting and excessive anger; will abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, bring harm to the body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the winning of others to Christ.

### Relationship Focus:

Furthermore, we will demonstrate Christian love to one another; pray for each other; help each other in sickness and distress; will be slow to take offense and quick to make reconciliation, will faithfully encourage and admonish one another as occasion may require, and will be zealous in our witness for Christ.

## **\*\*SUMMARY OF IBC'S DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

### **A. The Scriptures**

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Bible are verbally, equally, and fully inspired by God and are therefore without error in the original manuscripts. These Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ and should be interpreted literally. They are our final rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)

### **B. The Trinity**

We believe that the Godhead is one being, eternally existing in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections and worthy of precisely the same honor, confidence, and obedience. (Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

### **C. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ**

We believe that the eternal Son of God was born of a virgin, becoming and remaining a perfect man yet retaining His absolute deity, being at the same time very God and very man, and giving His life as a ransom for all. His death was substitutionary – the just for the unjust – and by His death He became the Savior of the lost. He arose bodily from the dead, ascended to heaven, and now never ceases to intercede for the saved. (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:14-18; Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Pet.3:18)

### **D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead who dwells in every believer and by His baptism unites all to Christ in one body. He restrains evil in the world, convicts the world of sin, regenerates and seals all believers, bestows gifts for service, and empowers those who are yielded to Him. (John 16:7-15; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13)

### **E. Creation and Humanity**

We believe that in the beginning God created all things out of nothing. He created humanity – male and female – in his own image, and therefore human life possesses inherent value. God has ordained the institution of marriage, which is a union between one man and one woman (as genetically defined and created by God), and has reserved sexual acts for marriage. Man fell through sin and lost his spiritual life; this spiritual death has been transmitted to the entire human race, which is essentially and unchangeably bad apart from divine grace (Christ Jesus alone being excepted). (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18-25; Ex. 20:11; Rom. 3:10-19)

### **F. Angels, Satan, and Demons**

We believe that God created spiritual beings known as angels. One sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan or the Devil, and many angels followed him in his moral fall. Satan is the originator of sin and, under the permission of God, led our first parents into transgression. In the end, he will be cast into the lake of fire. Many angels, however, kept their holy estate and are ministering spirits to those who are saved. (2 Cor. 11:14; 1 Tim. 3:6; Heb. 1:14)

### **G. Salvation**

We believe that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; this redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and died in our place, and comes only through faith in Christ. All who are thus truly saved shall be kept saved forever and may be assured of their salvation. (John 3:5-8; 10:28; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:13)

### **H. Sanctification**

We believe that sanctification is a three-fold setting-apart unto God. It is positionally complete in Christ, progressively advanced through the Holy Spirit, and ultimately accomplished when the Christian sees the Lord. We are called with a holy calling to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon our Lord. (John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 5:23)

### **I. The Church**

We believe that all who are united to Christ are members of the Church. The New Testament teaches the establishment and continuation of the local church to seek the salvation of all people, to edify believers, and to assemble for worship. Believers' baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of the church. (Mt. 16:16-18; 28:19; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 11:17-33; 12:12-27)

### **J. Last Things**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will rapture His church and return in person, with power and great glory, to reign for 1000 years. He will lift the curse on creation, restore Israel to her land, fulfill God's covenant promises, and bring the whole world to the knowledge of God. All people will experience a bodily resurrection, the unsaved to everlasting punishment and the saved to eternal life (Mt. 25:46; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20:1-3; 20:12-21:4)

