

FOCUS 2013-14

THEME: *Shape the Future*

RETREAT GOAL: To launch *The Identity Initiative* through a short retreat that encourages us to explore, create and commit to a cluster of shared ministry values that will guide us as we engage in discussions about how to express our identity, values and doctrinal convictions in ways that are meaningful for 2015 and beyond...

SCHEDULE:

Monday

- 3:00 Registration
- 4:00 Session #1 – *Why We Care*
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:30 Session #2 - *Celebrating the Gift of Multigenerational Leadership*

Tuesday

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Session #3 – *Learning About Values from a Veteran Leader*
- 10:30 Session #4 - *A Life Worth Imitating – Passing Along My Ministry Values*
- 12:00 Lunch
- Afternoon options include Hiking, Relaxing, Talking, Praying, Canoeing, Fishing
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:30 Session #5 - *Toward Creating a Shared Set of GBC Values*

Wednesday

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Session #6 - *Learning to Play in the Same Sandbox*
- 10:30 Session #7 - *Where to We Go From Here?*

GENERATIONS will be defined as *young* (20-39), *middle* (40-59) and *mature* (60+)

Discussion Questions for ‘*Why I love my tribe*’

1. I am a part of the FGBC because ...
2. One thing I really appreciate about the FGBC is ...
3. As I think about the future of our tribe, one thing I fear is ...
As I think about the future of our tribe, one reason for optimism is...

The Book of 2 Timothy

The Message

1 ¹⁻² I, Paul, am on special assignment for Christ, carrying out God's plan laid out in the Message of Life by Jesus. I write this to you, Timothy, the son I love so much. All the best from our God and Christ be yours!

3-4 Every time I say your name in prayer—which is practically all the time—I thank God for you, the God I worship with my whole life in the tradition of my ancestors. I miss you a lot, especially when I remember that last tearful good-bye, and I look forward to a joy-packed reunion.

5-7 That precious memory triggers another: your honest faith—and what a rich faith it is, handed down from your grandmother Lois to your mother Eunice, and now to you! And the special gift of ministry you received when I laid hands on you and prayed—keep that ablaze! God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible.

8-10 So don't be embarrassed to speak up for our Master or for me, his prisoner. Take your share of suffering for the Message along with the rest of us. We can only keep on going, after all, by the power of God, who first saved us and then called us to this holy work. We had nothing to do with it. It was all *his* idea, a gift prepared for us in Jesus long before we knew anything about it. But we know it now. Since the appearance of our Savior, nothing could be plainer: death defeated, life vindicated in a steady blaze of light, all through the work of Jesus.

11-12 This is the Message I've been set apart to proclaim as preacher, emissary, and teacher. It's also the cause of all this trouble I'm in. But I have no regrets. I couldn't be more sure of my ground—the One I've trusted in can take care of what he's trusted me to do right to the end.

13-14 So keep at your work, this faith and love rooted in Christ, exactly as I set it out for you. It's as sound as the day you first heard it from me. Guard this precious thing placed in your custody by the Holy Spirit who works in us.

15-18 I'm sure you know by now that everyone in the province of Asia deserted me, even Phygelus and Hermogenes. But God bless Onesiphorus and his family! Many's the time I've been refreshed in that house. And he wasn't embarrassed a bit that I was in jail. The first thing he did when he got to Rome was look me up. May God on the Last Day treat him as well as he treated me. And then there was all the help he provided in Ephesus—but you know that better than I.

2 ¹⁻⁷ So, my son, throw yourself into this work for Christ. Pass on what you heard from me—the whole congregation saying Amen!—to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others. When the going gets rough, take it on the chin with the rest of us, the way Jesus did. A soldier on duty doesn't get caught up in making deals at the marketplace. He concentrates on carrying out orders. An athlete who refuses to play by the rules will never get anywhere. It's the diligent farmer who gets the produce. Think it over. God will make it all plain.

8-13 Fix this picture firmly in your mind: Jesus, descended from the line of David, raised from the dead. It's what you've heard from me all along. It's what I'm sitting in jail for right now—but God's Word isn't in jail! That's why I stick it out here—so that everyone God calls will get in on the salvation of Christ in all its glory. This is a sure thing:

If we die with him, we'll live with him;
If we stick it out with him, we'll rule with him;
If we turn our backs on him, he'll turn his back on us;
If we give up on him, he does not give up—
for there's no way he can be false to himself.

¹⁴⁻¹⁸ Repeat these basic essentials over and over to God's people. Warn them before God against pious nitpicking, which chips away at the faith. It just wears everyone out. Concentrate on doing your best for God, work you won't be ashamed of, laying out the truth plain and simple. Stay clear of pious talk that is only talk. Words are not mere words, you know. If they're not backed by a godly life, they accumulate as poison in the soul. Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples, throwing believers off stride and missing the truth by a mile by saying the resurrection is over and done with.

¹⁹ Meanwhile, God's firm foundation is as firm as ever, these sentences engraved on the stones:

GOD KNOWS WHO BELONGS TO HIM.
SPURN EVIL, ALL YOU WHO NAME GOD AS GOD.

²⁰⁻²¹ In a well-furnished kitchen there are not only crystal goblets and silver platters, but waste cans and compost buckets—some containers used to serve fine meals, others to take out the garbage. Become the kind of container God can use to present any and every kind of gift to his guests for their blessing.

²²⁻²⁶ Run away from infantile indulgence. Run after mature righteousness—faith, love, peace—joining those who are in honest and serious prayer before God. Refuse to get involved in inane discussions; they always end up in fights. God's servant must not be argumentative, but a gentle listener and a teacher who keeps cool, working firmly but patiently with those who refuse to obey. You never know how or when God might sober them up with a change of heart and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape the Devil's trap, where they are caught and held captive, forced to run his errands.

³ ¹⁻⁵ Don't be naive. There are difficult times ahead. As the end approaches, people are going to be self-absorbed, money-hungry, self-promoting, stuck-up, profane, contemptuous of parents, crude, coarse, dog-eat-dog, unbending, slanderers, impulsively wild, savage, cynical, treacherous, ruthless, bloated windbags, addicted to lust, and allergic to God. They'll make a show of religion, but behind the scenes they're animals. Stay clear of these people.

⁶⁻⁹ These are the kind of people who smooth-talk themselves into the homes of unstable and needy women and take advantage of them; women who, depressed by their sinfulness, take up with every new religious fad that calls itself "truth." They get exploited every time and never really learn. These men are like those old Egyptian frauds Jannes and Jambres, who challenged Moses. They were rejects from the faith, twisted in their thinking, defying truth itself. But nothing will come of these latest impostors. Everyone will see through them, just as people saw through that Egyptian hoax.

¹⁰⁻¹³ You've been a good apprentice to me, a part of my teaching, my manner of life, direction, faith, steadiness, love, patience, troubles, sufferings—suffering along with me in all the grief I had to put up with in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. And you also well know that God rescued me! Anyone who wants to live all out for Christ is in for a lot of trouble; there's no getting around it. Unscrupulous con men will continue to exploit the faith. They're as deceived as the people they lead astray. As long as they are out there, things can only get worse.

¹⁴⁻¹⁷ But don't let it faze you. Stick with what you learned and believed, sure of the integrity of your teachers—why, you took in the sacred Scriptures with your mother's milk! There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.

⁴ ¹⁻² I can't impress this on you too strongly. God is looking over your shoulder. Christ himself is the Judge, with the final say on everyone, living and dead. He is about to break into the open with his rule, so proclaim the Message with intensity; keep on your watch. Challenge, warn, and urge your people. Don't ever quit. Just keep it simple.

³⁻⁵ You're going to find that there will be times when people will have no stomach for solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk food—catchy opinions that tickle their fancy. They'll turn their backs on truth and chase mirages. But *you*—keep your eye on what you're doing; accept the hard times along with the good; keep the Message alive; do a thorough job as God's servant.

⁶⁻⁸ You take over. I'm about to die, my life an offering on God's altar. This is the only race worth running. I've run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that's left now is the shouting—God's applause! Depend on it, he's an honest judge. He'll do right not only by me, but by everyone eager for his coming.

⁹⁻¹³ Get here as fast as you can. Demas, chasing fads, went off to Thessalonica and left me here. Crescens is in Galatia province, Titus in Dalmatia. Luke is the only one here with me. Bring Mark with you; he'll be my right-hand man since I'm sending Tychicus to Ephesus. Bring the winter coat I left in Troas with Carpus; also the books and parchment notebooks.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Watch out for Alexander the coppersmith. Fiercely opposed to our Message, he caused no end of trouble. God will give him what he's got coming.

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ At my preliminary hearing no one stood by me. They all ran like scared rabbits. But it doesn't matter—the Master stood by me and helped me spread the Message loud and clear to those who had never heard it. I was snatched from the jaws of the lion! God's looking after me, keeping me safe in the kingdom of heaven. All praise to him, praise forever! Oh, yes!

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila; also, the family of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed behind in Corinth. I had to leave Trophimus sick in Miletus.

²¹ Try hard to get here before winter.

Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all your friends here send greetings.

²² God be with you. Grace be with you.

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Discussion Questions for 2 Timothy

You can download these questions directly to your device at <http://bit.ly/18uopBR>

1. As we look to the next generation, what evidences might help us know if they are characterized by “a sincere faith?”
2. What can we do to create an environment where they are encouraged to “fan into flame the gift of God” which is in them? (1:5-6)
3. How can we model a faith in God before the next generation that encourages them to “testify about our Lord” without shame and to suffer willingly for the gospel? (1:8-12)
4. What is a “pattern of sound teaching” and how do we “keep” it? (1:13)
5. What is the “good deposit” and how does one “guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit that lives within us?” (1:14)
6. How do we discern who are the “reliable men” and how do we effectively “entrust” them (2:2)
7. What is the gospel we preach (2:8) and how do we help ensure it stays as simple and pure as it was for Paul?
8. What is “quarreling about words” and why is it such a serious offense? (2:14) How should we as men of God and leaders in the FGBC respond to those who commit this offense? (2:23-26)
9. What ‘space’ must we create so that the next generation can ‘learn and become convinced’ of these things? (3:14)
10. What does a “man of God who is thoroughly equipped for every good work” look like today? What will he look like tomorrow? (3:16)
11. How do we model before the next generation a commitment to “preach the Word ... in season and out of season?” (4:2ff)
12. What specific evidences might help us come to the end of our ministries and know that we have “fought the good fight ... finished the race ... and kept the faith?” (4:7)

A Life Worth Imitating

Passing Along My Values

You can download this page to your device at this address <http://bit.ly/GzPtq0>

Please send your completed letter to dguiles@encompassworld.org.

Create a one-page letter to your spiritual son, your final words of what you most value and hope he has learned from your example.

My dear son,

I realize you will be serving Christ in a world far different than the one where I was trained and first released into ministry. Your methods, your dress, your vocabulary, the technologies you use and even the problems you face may have little in common with the world I knew, or even the world in which we both minister today. You will be a faithful servant of Christ not because you mimic my words or imitate my ministry style, but because you live out the timeless values we share – values that come to us from the Word of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So while I still have the opportunity, I want to take a few minutes to summarize in writing the values and life lessons I have attempted to live out before you and most want to pass on to you...

Case Studies

These case studies were created to use as discussion starters as we wrestle with how our identity and values should impact the way we adapt to changing realities within our tribe. Select one for discussion in your small group. At a later session, we do not intend to discuss your *actual responses* to the questions, but rather how our identity and values should *shape the way we discuss and resolve* these issues.

CASE STUDY 1: *What I Know or What I Believe?*

Joe is young leader preparing for his licensure exam. As a graduate of Grace Seminary, he is confident that his answers will satisfy the pastors on his examining committee. But he faces an ethical challenge. He sees a difference between giving the answers *expected by his committee* and sharing *his degree of certainty* about those answers. “After all,” he reasons, “three to five years of intense seminary training told me what our group considers orthodox truth. I can even explain how our positions differ from others. I can express what I *know*, but can I honestly say this is what I *believe*?”

Yet Joe feels that much rides on his success with his examining committee. He wants to put ‘licensed’ on his resume and sees licensure as a type of ‘approval of his peers’ as he begins pastoral ministry. An older pastor advised Joe “to not overthink the issues,” and give answers he knows would be acceptable to the committee. “Over time,” the older pastor observed, “your convictions will grow just like happened to me.”

But for Joe, that feels like an ethical ‘slippery slope.’

Questions to ponder:

1. In your opinion, how much importance should Joe place on the licensure process? How much importance should his local church place on licensure?
2. How would you counsel Joe to engage his committee?
3. How would the individual pastors and licensure committees in your area advise Joe?
4. Do you feel the FGBC creates sufficient ‘space’ for emerging leaders to work out their doctrinal convictions? Why or why not?
5. What would you change about current licensure practices in the FGBC to help us to maintain appropriate doctrinal standards while empowering emerging leaders to develop healthy doctrinal convictions?

CASE STUDY 2: *Where are your loyalties ... really?*

Grace Community Church enjoys the relationships forged over time with other FGBC churches. When schedules permit, the lead pastor encourages his staff and leaders to participate in FGBC sponsored events for leaders, laymen and youth. "Family ties are good ties," he observes, "and our connections with the FGBC enrich us in many ways. We also like the sense of being on mission with likeminded churches as we send out cross-cultural workers."

But Grace Community Church doesn't view the FGBC as its *only* network. "After all," the church and its leaders reason, "we are enriched by forming a part of multiple networks. The body of Christ is much bigger than our GBC tribe, and we receive value from our interaction with many other believers. The days of demanding exclusive loyalty to a single network are long gone."

Some leaders and churches in their immediate vicinity question whether this church is really loyal to its heritage and family. "Grace Brethren prayers and finances started the church," they reason, "yet it seems like its leaders prefer forging ties with other spiritual tribes." New staff members are often recruited from outside the FGBC. The church is considering a joint venture with an independent congregation to start an inner city church "What brand will the new church be?" is a common question quietly discussed at district meetings.

Questions to Ponder:

1. What do you see as potential strengths and weaknesses of participating in multiple networks?
2. At what point do you feel a church might 'cross the line' and no longer show appropriate loyal to the FGBC tribe? Does such a line exist? Why or why not? Should such a line exist? If so, who should draw it?
3. What is your definition of 'loyal'? How might your definition be the same and how might it be different from leaders of a different generation?
4. In your opinion, what is the difference between considering the FGBC a fellowship, a denomination or a network? How does a change in terms create a change in expectations?

CASE STUDY 3: *Are you in, are you out, or is it enough that we are headed in the same direction?*

During the recent discussions about the FGBC constitution and bylaws, we agreed upon a change that moved us from stating that a church must *subscribe to* the Statement of Faith to a church must *agree to live harmoniously under* our Covenant and Statement of Faith:

Section One. Covenant. The sovereign congregations which are members of this corporation are united in accepting the Holy Scriptures as the sole guide and authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and practice.

Section Two. Statement of Faith. The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches has a corporate commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God's revealed truth. The Statement of Faith is the expression of a never ending effort to clarify an understand of the primary doctrines we accept.

It is the understanding of this Fellowship that, although individual Grace Brethren Churches remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, congregational church government relates alone to the incidental affairs of the local congregation and not to doctrinal practices or tenets which must be general or universal [sic] the same in all congregations. Accordingly, the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc., believing the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible to be the infallible rule of faith and practice and feeling the responsibility to make know the divine message of the Bible, present the following articles as a statement of those basic truths as taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice (The twelve paragraphs follow here).

Questions to Ponder:

1. In your opinion, what are the potential strengths and weaknesses of the statements *subscribe to* and *agree to live harmoniously under*?
2. Which of these statements do you feel places the FGBC in the best possible position to move forward as a tribe? Why?
3. According to our constitution, we require *congregations* "to agree to live harmoniously under the Covenant and Statement of Faith." To the best of your ability, describe what it looks like for a congregation to fulfill this requirement.
4. What might be an appropriate way to verify the degree of compliance of a local congregation to this requirement? Would such a means of verification add value or subtract value from our tribe? Why or why not?

CASE STUDY 4: *After all these years, I am still learning ... Is that ok?*

Paul is a veteran FGBC leader who has earned the confidence of his local flock and area pastors as a man of discipline and integrity. He is also a student of the Word who is never content to rest on what he already knows. It is this drive that led him to pursue an advanced degree. He chose a non-FGBC affiliated school out of a sincere desire to broaden his exposure and understanding of the multiple streams of historic and current Christian doctrine. Some of his colleagues applauded this effort to *cross-pollinate*, while others raised their eyebrows and wondered if this path would lead to *compromise*.

In Paul's words, exposure to other faith traditions is leading him to hold his current convictions "with a bit more patience toward those who disagree." He is quick to clarify, "When I went to Bible School and Seminary, we primarily focused on absorbing the convictions of our professors. When we discussed other doctrinal positions, it was with a view of demonstrating their weaknesses. I now see more clearly how one can be a careful scholar yet hold different views from what I was taught. So I find myself in a very disconcerting place. I don't want to be 'disloyal' to my tribe's convictions, nor do I want my brothers to look on me with suspicion. This is my family and I want what is best for it."

Paul's question to us can be summarized as follows, "Is there room in our tribe for veterans like me who may be questioning some of our traditional expressions of doctrine?"

Questions to Ponder:

1. How would you counsel Paul to resolve the tension he is experiencing? Should he even feel a tension? Why or why not?
2. Let's assume Paul reaches a point where he feels it is no longer ethical to claim he agrees with every clause in our Statement of Faith. But he agrees with most of it and remains committed to work for the welfare of our tribe. In your opinion, how much doctrinal alignment to our Statement of Faith should be required of a leader who identifies with the FGBC? Why?
3. Paul is deeply committed to his congregation and they are deeply committed to him. If Paul determines it is no longer ethical to claim that he agrees with our Statement of Faith, how should his congregation respond?
4. Under these circumstances, is it more ethical for a good shepherd to leave his flock or remain with it? Can you support your opinion with Scripture?
5. Should the FGBC create a means of verifying the level of doctrinal integrity (or agreement) of its pastors? If so, how might this be accomplished?

CASE STUDY 5: *Differentiating doctrinal statements. Do they all merit the same font?*

Each year, the FGBC calls upon its *Continuing Resolutions Committee* to help us formulate appropriate responses to the burning social issues of our day. Our current continuing resolutions include statements on *The Sanctity of Human Life* (1982, 1996), *Religious Freedom* (1987), *Personal Commitment* (1988), *Homosexuality* (2000), *Immigration* (2012), *Religious Liberty* (2012), *Same-sex Marriage and Religious Liberty* (2012) and *Terrorism and the Persecuted Church* (2012).

1. How would you explain to an emerging leader the differences between the current Statement of Faith and our Continuing Resolutions?
2. What degree of agreement with our Continuing Resolutions do you feel should be required for a leader to be considered faithful to the doctrines and practices of the FGBC? Why?
3. With the perspective of looking back fifty years later, if you were called upon to craft our current Statement of Faith, are there sections you think would be more appropriately clustered as continuing resolutions? Which ones and why?

Brief History of FGBC Doctrinal Statements

THE MESSAGE OF THE BRETHREN MINISTRY National Ministerial Association of The Brethren Church (1921)

Since its inception in 1883, The Brethren Church had avoided adopting any statement of faith. When a very simple statement was proposed at the beginning, someone moved the New Testament as the substitute motion for the statement of faith, and they voted by unanimously singing the doxology together! However, by 1892 the need for a simple statement on Brethren distinctives including trine immersion baptism, threefold communion, and congregational government was recognized and the conference adopted it. By 1915, it was clear that Liberalism was creeping into The Brethren Church as in every other evangelical denomination. The battles for orthodoxy were led by L. S. Bauman and Alva J. McClain. The final result was that in 1921 the National Ministerial Association adopted *The Message of the Brethren Ministry* as the essential beliefs for members of that body. Alva J. McClain prepared the original statement that was adopted with minimal change. *The Message* would not be adopted by the national conference until 1938. It will be carried over by the National Fellowship of Brethren Churches as their statement of faith until 1969.

THE COVENANT OF FAITH Grace Theological Seminary (1937)

When Grace Theological Seminary began in 1937 it was immediately decided to draft a statement of faith which all faculty and all members of the Board of Trustees would be required to sign annually. *The Covenant of Faith* of Grace Schools was drafted under the leadership of Dr. McClain. It is no surprise that it resembles the original *Message of the Brethren Ministry*. This statement appears in the Articles of Incorporation of Grace Schools with the requirement that it cannot be changed or amended.

THE STATEMENT OF FAITH Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (1969)

In 1967 the conference appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Russell D. Barnard to clarify and strengthen the original *Message of the Brethren Ministry*. The new statement was intended to be a better and clearer expression of the doctrines held by Grace Brethren Churches. It was adopted in 1969 with only a handful of dissenting votes. It is included in the Constitution of the FGBC, but there is also included a process by which the Statement of Faith can be changed or amended.

The Message of the Brethren Ministry

Adopted by the National Ministerial Association, 1921

Adopted by The Brethren Church, 1938

Carried over to The Grace Brethren Church, 1940

The Message which Brethren Ministers accept as a divine entrustment to be heralded to a lost world, finds its sole source and authority in the Bible. This message is one of hope for a lost world and speaks with finality and authority. Fidelity to the apostolic injunction to preach the Word demands our utmost endeavor of mind and heart. We, the members of the National Ministerial Association of The Brethren Church, hold that the essential and constituent elements of our message shall continue to be the following declarations:

1. Our motto: The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible.
2. The authority and integrity of the Holy Scriptures.

The ministry of The Brethren Church desires to bear testimony to the belief that God's supreme revelation has been made through Jesus Christ, a complete and authentic record of which revelation is the New Testament and, to the belief that the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are the infallible record of the perfect, final and authoritative revelation of God's will, altogether sufficient in themselves as a rule of faith and practice.

3. We understand the basic content of our doctrinal preaching to be:
 - (1) The Pre-Existence. Deity and Incarnation by Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
 - (2) The Fall of Man, his consequent spiritual death and utter sinfulness, and the necessity of his New Birth;
 - (3) The Vicarious Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ through the shedding of His own blood;
 - (4) The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the body in which He suffered and died, and His subsequent glorification at the right hand of God;
 - (5) Justification by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of which obedience to the will of God, and works of righteousness, are the evidence and result; the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, and the life everlasting of the just;
 - (6) The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, Who indwells the Christian and is his Comforter and Guide;
 - (7) The personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords, the glorious goal for which we are taught to watch, wait and pray;
 - (8) The Christian should "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind"; should not engage in carnal strife, and should "swear not at all";
 - (9) The Christian should observe, as his duty and privilege, the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, among which are: (a) Baptism of Believers by Triune Immersion; (b) Confirmation; (c) the Lord's Supper; (d) the Communion of the Bread and Wine; (e) the Washing of the Saints' Feet; and (f) the Anointing of the Sick with Oil.

Grace College and Seminary
Covenant of Faith
Statement of Doctrine
Adopted by The Board of Trustees, 1937

As stated under paragraph VI of the original Charter, it is one of the essential purposes of Grace "To carry on the educational activities of this corporation in complete harmony with the articles of the following 'Covenant of Faith,' which cannot be changed or diminished," and to which each member of the faculty and board of trustees is required to "subscribe annually in writing."

1. We believe in THE HOLY SCRIPTURES: accepting fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God, altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35, 16:13, 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).

2. We believe in THE ONE TRIUNE GOD: who is personal, spirit, and sovereign (Mark 12:29; John 4:24, 14:9; Ps. 135:6); perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness, love, wisdom, and power (Ps. 18:30, 114:7; Deut. 33:27); absolutely separate and above the world as its Creator; yet everywhere present in the world as the Upholder of all things (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 104); self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 5:26; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), each of whom is to be honored and worshiped equally as true God (John 5:23; Acts 5:3-4).

3. We believe in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who is the Second Person of the Triune God, the eternal Word and Only Begotten Son, our great God and Savior (John 1:1, 3:16; Titus 2:13; Rom. 9:5); that, without any essential change in His divine Person (Heb. 13:8), He became man by the miracle of Virgin Birth (John 1:14; Matt. 1:23), thus to continue forever as both true God Man, one Person with two natures (Col. 2:9, Rev. 22:16); that as Man, He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15; John 8:46); that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave himself in death upon the Cross bearing the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead (Isa. 53:5-6; Matt. 20:28; Gal. 3:13; John 1:29); that He arose again from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which He suffered and died (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:25-28); that as our great High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor (Heb. 4:14, 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

4. We believe in THE HOLY SPIRIT: who is the Third Person of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4), the divine Agent in nature, revelation, and redemption (Gen. 1:2; Ps 104:30; 1 Cor. 2:10; 2 Cor. 3:18); that He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8-11), regenerates those who believe (John 3:5), and indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, and sanctifies all who become children of God through Christ (1 Cor. 6:19, 12:13; Eph. 4:30, 3:16; Rom 8:14; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 6:11).

5. We believe in THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN: that he was the direct creation of God, spirit and soul and body, not in any sense the product of an animal ancestry, but made in the divine image (Gen. 1:26-29, 2:7 and 18-24; Matt. 19:4, 1 Thess. 5:23); that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature and the progenitor of a fallen race (Gen. 3:1-24, 5:3), who are universally sinful in both nature and practice (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 3:23, 5:12), alienated from the life and family of God (Eph. 4:18; John 8:42-44), under the righteous judgement and wrath of God (Rom. 1:18, 3:19), and have within themselves no possible means of recovery or salvation (Mark 7:21-23; Matt. 19:26; Rom 7:18).

6. We believe in SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH: that salvation is the free gift of God (Rom. 3:24, 6:23), neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man (Titus 3:5; Rom. 4:4-5, 11:16), but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 6:28-29; Acts 16:30-31; Eph. 2:8-9), in whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed

for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (1 John 5:13; Rom. 3:22; Gal. 3:26; John 5:24; Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3; John 10:27-30); that this salvation includes the whole man, spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23-24); and apart from Christ there is no possible salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

7. We believe in **RIGHTEOUS LIVING AND GOOD WORKS**: not as the procuring cause of salvation in any sense, but as its proper evidence and fruit (1 John 3:9-11, 4:19, 5:4; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:14; Matt. 7:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:10); and therefore as Christians we should keep the word of our Lord (John 14:23), seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1), walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8), and especially accept as our solemn responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world in order that we may bear much fruit (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19; John 14:16); remembering that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who learned they are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and who in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God have presented themselves wholly to Him for His service (Rom. 12:1-2).

8. We believe in **THE EXISTENCE OF SATAN**: who originally was created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and unlawful ambition rebelled against God (Ezek. 18:13-17; Isa. 14:13-14; 1 Tim. 3:7); thus becoming utterly depraved in character (John 8:44), the great Adversary of God and His people (Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:10), leader of all other evil angels and spirits (Matt. 12:24-26, 25:41), the deceiver and god of this present world (Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 4:4); that his powers are supernaturally great, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God, who overrules all his wicked devices for good (Job 1:1-22; Luke 22:31-32); that he was defeated and judged at the Cross, and therefore his final doom is certain (John 12:31-32, 16:11; Rev. 20:10); that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the Blood of the Lamb (Eph. 6:12-18; Rev. 12:11).

9. We believe in **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**: that His return from Heaven will be personal, visible, and glorious—a Blessed Hope for which we should constantly watch and pray, the time being unrevealed but always imminent (Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Mark 13:33-37; Titus 2:11-13; Rev. 22:20); that when he comes He will first by resurrection and translation remove from the earth His waiting Church (1 Thess. 4:16-18), then pour out the righteous judgements of God upon the unbelieving world (Rev. 6:1-18:24), afterward descend with His church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years (Rev. 19:1-20:6; Matt. 13:41-43), at the close of which He will rise and judge the unsaved dead (Rev. 20:11-15), and finally as the Son of David deliver up His Messianic Kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), in order that as the Eternal Son He may reign forever with the Father in the New Heaven and the New Earth (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 21:1-22:6).

10. We believe in **FUTURE LIFE, BODILY RESURRECTION, AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT**: that the spirits of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven (Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:35-58; 1 John 3:2), at which time their works shall be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of rewards, a judgment which may issue in the loss of rewards, but not in the loss of the soul (1 Cor. 3:8-15); that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgement (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Peter 2:9 ASV), at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, they shall be judged according to their works, and cast into the place of final and everlasting punishment ((Rev. 20:11-15, 21:8; Mark 9:43-48; Jude 13).

11. We believe in **THE ONE TRUE CHURCH**: the mystical Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus (Eph. 4:4; 5:25-32), which He began to build on the day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47), and will complete at His second coming (1 Thess. 4:16-17); and into which all true believers of the present age are baptized immediately by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13 with 1:2); that all the various members of this one spiritual Body should assemble themselves together in local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, united testimony; and the observance of the ordinances of our Lord (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:41-47), among which are the following: the Baptism of believers by Triune Immersion (Matt. 28:20), the Laying on of Hands (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), the Washing of the Saints' Feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's Supper or Lovefeast (1 Cor. 11:17-22; Jude 12 ASV),

the Communion of the Bread and Cup (1 Cor. 11:23-24), and Prayer and Anointing for the Sick (James 5:13-18).

12. We believe in SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD: that since our Christian citizenship is in heaven, as the children of God we should walk in separation from this present world, having no fellowship with its evil ways (Phil. 3:20 ASV; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:11), abstaining from all worldly amusements and unclean habits which defile mind and body (Luke 8:14; 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 Peter 2:11; Eph. 5:3-11, 18; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), from the sin of divorce and remarriage as forbidden by our Lord (Matt. 19:9), from the swearing of any oath (James 5:12), from the use of unbelieving courts for the settlements of disputes between Christians (1 Cor. 6:1-9), and from taking personal vengeance in carnal strife (Rom. 12:18-21; 2 Cor. 10:3-4).

We understand that the above Articles do not by any means exhaust the content of our creed which is the whole Word of God, and they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within this Word; but we do believe that in so far as these Articles extend they are a true presentation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures, and therefore binding upon us as Christian believers.

Covenant And Statement Of Faith

Adopted by the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, 1969

Section One. Covenant. The sovereign congregations which are members of this corporation are united in accepting the Holy Scriptures as the sole guide and authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and practice.

Section Two. Statement of Faith. The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches has a corporate commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God's revealed truth. The Statement of Faith is the current expression of a never-ending effort to clarify an understanding of the primary doctrines we accept.

It is the understanding of this Fellowship that, although individual Grace Brethren Churches remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, congregational church government relates alone to the incidental affairs of the local congregation and not to doctrinal practices or tenets which must be general or universal -- the same in all congregations. The basic doctrines of one congregation shall be the same as the basic doctrines in every other.

Accordingly, the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc., believing the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible to be the infallible rule of faith and of practice and feeling the responsibility to make known the divine message of the Bible, presents the following articles as a statement of those basic truths taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice.

1. THE BIBLE. The Word of God, the sixty-six Books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. THE ONE TRUE GOD. Existing eternally as three persons -the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).
3. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. His preexistence and deity (John 1:1-3), incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23), sinless life (Heb. 4:15), substitutionary death (2 Cor. 5:21), bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43), ascension into heaven and present ministry (Heb. 4:14-16), and coming again (Acts 1:11).
4. THE HOLY SPIRIT. His personality (John 16:7-15), and deity (Acts 5:3-4), and His work in each believer: baptism and in-dwelling at the moment of regeneration (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9), and filling (Eph. 5:18) to empower for Christian life and service (Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23).
5. MAN. His direct creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (John 3:3-5).
6. SALVATION. A complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
7. THE CHURCH. One true church, the body and the bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all true believers of the present age (1 Cor. 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Eph. 4:11-16).
8. CHRISTIAN LIFE. A life of righteousness, good works and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Rom. 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Eph. 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (1 Cor. 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (Rom. 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and maintaining a life of prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6), including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-18).

9. ORDINANCES. The Christians should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ which are (1)baptism of believers by triune immersion (Matt. 28:19) and (2)the threefold communion service, consisting of the washing of the saints' feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-22, 33-34; Jude 12), and the communion of the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:23-26).
10. SATAN. His existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (Rev. 12:1-10), his judgment (John 12:31), and final doom (Rev. 20:10).
11. SECOND COMING. The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (1 Thess. 4:16-17) before the tribulation (1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6).
12. FUTURE LIFE. The conscious existence of the dead (Phil. 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).

Continuing Resolutions of the FGBC

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

(From 1982 - made a continuing resolution in 1985)

Human life is worthy of respect and protection at all stages from the time of conception. The sanctity of human life is established by creation (Gen. 1:26-27), social protection [Gen. 9:6) and redemption (John 3:16].

(Added in 1996) We sympathize with the plight of childless married couples who desire offspring, but who are unable to conceive. We oppose, however, new fertilization techniques which do not respect the unique worth of each newly conceived life and which cheapen life by treating it as simply the property of another.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (From 1987)

We commend the efforts of our governmental leaders, which strive to preserve the free exercise of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution.

We express our strong objection to those efforts in government which would move the state away from "benevolent neutrality" to religion toward a secularistic "anti-religion" attitude, and which would reshape our nation as a secularist state.

We believe the free exercise of religion includes such activities as:

1. Freedom to meet in public places and in private homes for worship, Bible study, prayer, and evangelism, including freedom for our children to have equal access to the use of public school facilities for such purposes.
2. Freedom to operate private schools to instruct our children in the relation of our faith and values to all life.
3. Freedom to determine the qualifications for membership in our churches and schools and to exercise discipline on the basis of these qualifications.
4. Freedom to determine the standards for employees of our churches and schools, and to discharge employees who fail to maintain these standards.
5. Freedom to offer personal and family counseling according to the teachings of the Bible to those who seek it, without being licensed by a state agency, and without fear of reprisal from those who do not agree with the counseling.
6. Freedom to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others both publicly and privately.
7. Freedom to teach and practice what we believe the Bible teaches about morals, sexuality, personal relationships, private and public conduct, and all other matters that come within the scope of our religious concerns.
8. Freedom to strive to influence public policy from the perspective of our Christian values.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT (From 1988)

We resolve as a national fellowship of churches, as local churches, and as individuals:

To make four personal commitments:

- ❖ To spend quality time with Jesus Christ in the Word and in prayer.
- ❖ To fellowship with and minister to the body of Christ.
- ❖ To present the gospel to our friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors.
- ❖ To live this day as though Christ would return momentarily.

To make four prayer commitments:

- ❖ To pray daily for spiritual revival.
- ❖ To pray daily for five unsaved people. -"Handful for Christ."
- ❖ To pray daily for our pastors, missionaries, and other spiritual leaders.
- ❖ To pray daily for those in authority.

HOMOSEXUALITY (from 2000)

We do not believe that the practice of homosexuality excludes anyone from the fundamental rights and respect that are properly due to all persons because of their inclusion in the human race (as image-bearers of God) or because of their citizenship.

We believe that the practice of same-sex sexual relations is contrary to the pattern of sexuality created by God and directed by his commandments.

We affirm marriage to be a monogamous and heterosexual covenant entered into before God and man. We oppose same-sex marriage and legally constituted "domestic partnership" arrangements that act as substitutes for the marriage covenant.

We oppose all governmental and corporate coercion that requires secular employers and religious organizations to acknowledge "domestic partnerships" in order to be full participants in civic or business affairs. No person or organization should lose rights because they do not support homosexual rights.

We oppose the introduction of "speech codes" or the forbidding of so-called "hate speech." Such restrictions on speech lead to prohibiting, intimidating or discouraging people from expressing their convictions on homosexuality or being able to discuss or debate the issue in a reasonable way. We oppose the use of civil authorities to monitor such "hate speech."

We affirm that it is virtually impossible for those in public education to discuss homosexuality (or other issues of human sexuality) in the absence of some kind of ethical framework. Educators should not presume that their policies and teaching are "value neutral" or "only health issues" and should approach such topics sensitive to and with a reasoned analysis of the ethical and religious issues involved.

Immigration

Recognizing that:

- a. All people are made in the Image of God,
- b. Respect for the rule of law is essential in a civil society,
- c. Secure borders are the right and need of every nation,
- d. Israel was frequently reminded by God that she should show mercy to the immigrant because she, too, was once an oppressed and exploited people,
- e. The prophets in Scripture demanded special compassion to the exploited and vulnerable, including the “alien in the land”,
- f. Our nation is populated by people from a multitude of cultures and lands, and
- g. The presence of undocumented immigrants in this country (and in our churches) is a fact and a complex issue not easily resolved,

(1) We therefore call on our churches to give prayer, thought, discussion and action toward addressing the problem of the undocumented immigrant in a God-honoring way.

(2) We recognize the divisive and controversial nature of this debate and we encourage dialogue in the churches that is respectful, open-minded and solution-focused.

(3) We further call on our churches to be the “reconciling presence of Christ” in the midst of a broken system that creates rancor, resentment, racism, selfishness, fear, exploitation, danger and disregard for law.

(4) We call on our society and elected leaders to rise above political posturing and rancor to work toward a solution on immigration that:

- a. Respects the God-given dignity of every person,
- b. Rejects the nativism that ignores the love of God for all and our country’s history of immigration and openness to the foreigner, as captured in the words enshrined on the Statue of Liberty,
- c. Protects the unity of the immediate family and seeks the best interests of native-born children of undocumented immigrants,
- d. Respects the rule of law,
- e. Holds employers accountable for ensuring the legal status of workers,
- f. Creates secure national borders,
- g. Ensures fairness to taxpayers,
- h. Develops a generous and fair “guest worker” program,
- i. Protects all immigrants from exploitation and violence, and
- j. Establishes a pathway toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents or citizens—a pathway that both achieves justice and loves mercy.

We recognize that meaningful solutions to this problem are not easily reached. We also recognize the solutions must come through a determined will to reach them and cannot be ignored time after time, year after year.

Responsible Government Fiscal Policies

“The borrower is servant to the lender.” (Proverbs 22:7)

We express our concern over the federal government’s high deficit spending over the past several years and call on government at all levels to practice prudent fiscal policies.

Borrowing money today that our children and grandchildren will have to repay might be allowable for a long term asset like a house that they will inherit, but to spend it on our groceries is worse than bad stewardship; it is immoral.

Our government has discovered that it can borrow nearly any amount at nearly 0% interest rates and even ‘print’ money without cost. This politician’s dream is possible mainly because the Federal Reserve has made its responsibility for sound money secondary to its assignment to stimulate the economy in the hope of creating economic growth. Responsible money creation has been abandoned in this crisis opening us to the danger of inexperience, incompetence, or error which can significantly damage our nation’s economy.

To minimize this danger and to act in a manner that is in harmony with the biblical responsibility of government leaders to rule with integrity and in harmony with the biblical importance of savings, it is vital that governments, including our own, avoid a careless attitude toward government debt and inflation.

Recent experience in Europe and the United States exhibit such carelessness though the nation-destroying activities of hyperinflation (Weimar Germany) or asset confiscation (Argentina and others) have been avoided.

We call on our nation’s leaders to lead with responsible integrity and to protect the heritage of our children and the assets of its citizens by acting responsibly with respect to the federal deficit, the federal debt and federal money creation.

Freedom of Worship, Separation of Church and State, and True Religious Freedom

It has become common to hear about protecting “Freedom of Worship”. While this is vital, true religious freedom includes the right to live one’s faith outside a place of worship as well as to worship God by the convictions of our consciences. “Freedom of Worship” by itself truncates the concept of true religious freedom.

“Separation of Church and State” can be used as an absolute, controlling principle (often to mute the public activities of religion rather than to limit the actions of government toward religion). While this phrase is a useful metaphor, it is not a controlling principle.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is the best controlling principle and is a model to governments everywhere. True religious freedom is realized through a dynamic, generous understanding of the First Amendment’s limitations on government. “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Freedom to embrace and practice our religious beliefs and values without government coercion is a fundamental American principle and human right.

Health mandates are presently proposed that threaten true religious freedom for many. We resolve that religious organizations (not just “houses of worship” but also schools, medical ministries, social service agencies and other programs) should not be coerced into paying for health care benefits, such as for contraceptives and abortifacients, when this requirement forces these organizations to violate their core beliefs.

We do give thanks to God for the level of religious liberty experienced in the United States in spite of all challenges. We urge our federal government to further the cause of liberty world-wide through every good avenue available.

Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty

We regard the definition of marriage to be deeply and ultimately a religious issue. We affirm that marriage is intended by God to be a life-long covenant between a man and a woman. We deeply regret and dissent from the recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court that open the doors to same-sex marriage.

We resolve that no clergy, churches or individuals fulfilling their gainful employment who do not accept same-sex marriage should be coerced or punished for expressing their convictions or exercising their freedom of religion on this issue.

Prayer, Terrorism and the Persecuted Church

As our world faces domestic and international terrorism, unjust war and persecution of Christians and people of other faiths, we resolve as churches and as individuals to commit ourselves to regular, specific intercessory prayer for all who are in authority, that we might live peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Timothy 1:1-2).

We pray especially for the persecuted church throughout the world and will not forget those who suffer because of the name of Christ.

Where Do We Go From Here?

You can download these questions at <http://bit.ly/18WXFL7>

Please forward your answers to dguiles@encompassworld.org

1. How would you summarize what you believe to be your individual responsibilities as we move into regional, national and international dialogues to define the identity, values and doctrinal expressions of the Grace Brethren movement?

2. Is there something you would like to communicate to the North American Task Force charged with developing a rough draft for the GBC Truth Cluster?

3. Is there something you would like to communicate to Dave Guiles in his assigned task of leading the North American discussion on The Identity Project?