



From our Executive Director, Bartley Sawatsky

Greetings from Toronto! Vision Conference 2016 promises to be a great conference. It's been exactly 20 years since our fellowship came to Canada to kick off our ministry here, and we'll be celebrating that this summer. What's more, our theme this year is "Margins" and we'll be looking at how to do ministry better in a post-Christian world. I think you'll get a lot out of your time at conference this summer. We have a great line-up of speakers, some excellent workshops and vision-expanding excursions planned. We've got some fun stuff on the schedule too – like over 200 of us converging on Rogers Centre to watch the Toronto Blue Jays on Friday night!

One of the highlights this year will actually be happening at the end of conference, when delegates from our churches vote on acceptance the Charis document and participation in the Charis Alliance. This will be a historic vote, and I am thrilled to see the way God is uniting our movement not only in North America, but worldwide.

As you know, conference this summer will mark the end of my 3-year term as Executive Director. It has been a big commitment and I am glad to be able to put my focus back on my local church, but I have really enjoyed my time over these past few years. I have gained a real appreciation for our fellowship and I've enjoyed seeing some positive momentum forming among our pastors and churches. Praise the Lord for that!

Attached are business reports for delegates from our partnering churches. I know that we would all rather celebrate than do business, but there are a few things we need to care for. Please familiarize yourself with the agenda for our meeting plan. We will keep it brief. Thanks so much for your service to our fellowship.

Bartley

Reports...

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On separate pages:

- **Ballots**
- **Budget for 2017**

Agenda

Monday, July 25 at 1:00 p.m.

- 1) Membership Committee Report and action to seat delegates
- 2) Fellowship Council Elections and Ratifications (paper ballot)
- 3) Ratifications of Treasurer and Secretary and appointments (paper ballot)
- 4) Recommendations of a new member churches (* = pending fellowship council approval):
 - a) Sterling Grace Brethren Church of Sterling, AK (Roger Holl)
 - b) Impact Church of Coatesville PA (Chandal Taylor)
 - c) Bow Island Community Bible Church of Bow Island, Alberta (Oliver Edwards)
 - d) *Grace Ranch of Ashland of Ohio (Nathan Wells)
 - e) *St. Antoine Bible Church of Detroit, MI (Andy Shank)
- 5) The 2017 Budget
- 6) The Charis Alliance
- 7) New Resolutions
- 8) Election Results
- 9) Executive Director's Address – Bartley Sawatsky

Statistical Report for 2015

Presented to the 2016 Conference
(includes statistical reports received through July 1, 2016)

	2015		2014	2013	2012
	Avg	Total			
# of Churches in the FGBC (7/1/16)		238	249	250	251
# reporting statistics		194	194		200
Attendance	206	42,204	42,281	43,594	43,508
Small Group	68	13,727	15,494	15,426	15,802
Recorded Conversions	12	2,408	2,553	2,616	2,490
Baptisms	8	1,571	1,608	2,054	2,053
Total Members	115	22,519	22,991	24,589	23,854

Churches added since last report (2)

New Calvary Evangelical Church, Ft Lauderdale
Rock of Salvation Haitian Church

New churches - not yet members (6)

Gospel Community Church, Troy OH
Oakland Park, Ashland OH
Alexia Manor Church, Cleveland OH
Coshocton Ohio Church, Ashland OH
Columbus Ohio Church
Lancaster, Ohio Church

Churches deleted since last report (6)

Closed Soma Community Church, Springfield, OH
Closed El-Elyon Haitian Evangelical Ministry., Miramar, FL
Withdrew Fraternity Family Worship Center, Sunrise, FL
Withdrew Eagle Creek Grace Brethren Church, Indianapolis, IN
Merged Living The Word Church, Ashland, OH
Closed Harvest Bible Chapel, Beavercreek, OH
Dismissed Walker Road Grace Brethren Church, Beaverton Or

Churches that were adopted since last report (6)

Grace Fellowship - Upper Arlington Campus, Upper Arlington, OH
by Grace Fellowship, Pickerington Ohio
Lancaster Grace Brethren Church, Lancaster, PA
by Grace Church, Lititz, PA
Grace Brethren Church, Lakeland, FL
by Grace Church, Sebring Fl
Grace Church or Greater Akron - Ellet Campus, Akron, OH
by Grace Church of Greated Akron, Ohio
Trinity Grace Brethren Church, Northwood, OH
by Grace Community Church of Fremont, OH
Renew Church - Milton, Ontario
by Renew Church, Meadowvale

FGBC MEMBER CHURCH LIST

(as of July 1, 2016)

Listed by: State, City, Church Name, 2015 Avg. Worship Attendance/Membership

AB, Medicine Hat, Grasslands Church: 80/34
AK, Anchorage, Dimond Grace Fellowship: *
AK, Eagle River, Eagle River Grace: 160/92
AK, Kenai, Kenai Grace Brethren Church: 32/17
AK, Soldotna, Peninsula Grace Brethren Church: 109/68
AZ, Peoria, ValleyLife Grace Brethren Church: 75/75
AZ, Tonalea, Native New Life Ministries: *
BC, Delta, Community of Hope: 89/37
CA, Alta Loma, Grace Fellowship of Alta Loma: 30/39
CA, Auburn, Auburn Grace Community Church: 800/175
CA, Bellflower, Bellflower Brethren Church: 212/169
CA, Canyon Lake, New Hope Community Church: *
CA, Cherry Valley, Grace Fellowship: 85/50
CA, Chico, Chico Grace Brethren: 126/75
CA, Lakewood, Iglesia Cristiana De la Comunidad: *
CA, Lancaster, Iglesia Cristiana La Cosecha: *
CA, Long Beach, Community Grace Brethren Church: 49/51
CA, Long Beach, Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach: 406/362
CA, Long Beach, Grace Cambodia Church: *
CA, Long Beach, Los Altos Grace Brethren Church: 150/102
CA, Modesto, La Loma Grace Brethren Church: 110/200
CA, Norwalk, Grace Brethren Church of Norwalk: 100/75
CA, Orange, Grace Church of Orange: 378/182
CA, Rialto, Sunrise Mission: *
CA, Ripon, Ripon Grace Brethren Church: 214/168
CA, San Diego, Grace Brethren Church: 33/27
CA, Santa Ana, Maranatha Grace Brethren Church: 35/33
CA, Seal Beach, Grace Community Church of Seal Beach: 393/321
CA, Simi Valley, Grace Brethren Church: 458/228
CA, South Pasadena, Grace Brethren Church of S. Pasadena: 86/44
CA, Tracy, Grace Brethren Church of Tracy: *
CA, Whittier, Community Grace Brethren Church: 78/49
CA, Whittier, Grace Brethren Church of Whittier: *
CA, Yucca Valley, Grace Community Church: 53/20
CO, Colorado Springs, Grace Brethren Church: 30/28
CT, Wethersfield, CenterPoint Community Church: *
DC, Washington, About My Father's Business: 65/65
FL, Brooksville, Grace Brethren Church: 70/73
FL, Deerfield, Family Christian Community Center: 15/20
FL, Fort Lauderdale, New Calvary Evangelical Church, Inc: 80/78
FL, Fort Myers, Friendship Grace Brethren Church: 22/20
FL, Fort Myers, Grace Brethren Church: 60/28
FL, Lauderdale Lakes, Eglise Evangelique de la Paix: *
FL, Melbourne, Grace Brethren Church - Suntree: 50/4
FL, Miami, Mispa Missionary Community Church: 50/75
FL, North Miami, Église Chrétienne Rocher du Salut: 14/14
FL, Ormond Beach, Grace Community Church: 39/27
FL, Pinellas Park, Grace Brethren Church of Pinellas Park: 83/83
FL, Port Richey, Gulfview Grace Brethren Church: 213/143
FL, Sebring, Grace Church of Sebring: 308/110
FL, Tampa, Iglesia Comunal Cristiana: 130/45
FL, Valrico, Iglesia Comunal La Esperanza: *
GA, Kennesaw, Grace Church at Town Center: 61/53
HI, Mililani, Waipio Grace Brethren Church: 100/60
HI, Waipahu, Grace Fellowship Hawaii: 372/144
IA, Cedar Rapids, CR Grace Church: 16/23
IA, Dallas Center, Dallas Center Grace Brethren Church: 22/25
IA, Davenport, Grace Brethren Church: 27/22
IA, Garwin, Carlton Brethren Church: 22/40
IA, North English, Pleasant Grove Grace Brethren Church: 11/12
IA, Waterloo, Grace Fellowship Church: 144/135
IN, Berne, Bethel Brethren Church: 60/93
IN, Columbia City, Community of Hope Grace Brethren Church: 120/
IN, Elkhart, Fuente de Vida Grace Bilingual Church: 60/30
IN, Flora, Grace Brethren Church: *
IN, Fort Wayne, Grace Brethren Church: 50/52
IN, Goshen, Grace Community Church: 2380/423
IN, Howe, Brighton Chapel Brethren Church: 275/n/a
IN, Kokomo, Indian Heights Grace Brethren Church: 25/15
IN, Leesburg, Leesburg Grace Brethren Church: 84/47
IN, Osceola, Grace Brethren Church: 237/87
IN, Warsaw, Community Grace Brethren Church: 216/185
IN, Winona Lake, Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church: 846/717
KS, Portis, Grace Brethren Church of Portis: 72/47
KS, Wichita, Grace Brethren Church of Wichita: *
KY, Clayhole, Clayhole Grace Brethren Church: 13/13
KY, Hyden, Victory Mountain Grace Brethren Chapel: 24/13
KY, Jackson, Happy Church: 70/50
MA, Essex, North Shore Bible Church: 87/61
MD, Accident, Grace Brethren Church: 100/
MD, Clinton, Clinton Grace Brethren Church: 289/257
MD, Easton, Mid-Shore Community Church: 24/20
MD, Frederick, Grace Community Church: 548/222
MD, Hagerstown, Calvary Grace Brethren Church: 48/51
MD, Hagerstown, Cornerstone Community Church: 58/45
MD, Hagerstown, Maranatha Brethren Church: 144/138
MD, Hagerstown, Valley Grace Brethren Church: 260/116
MD, Lanham, Grace Brethren Church: 64/37
MD, Leonardtown, The Point of Grace Church: *
MD, Mechanicsville, Grace Chapel Ministries of Southern MD: 245/189
MD, Owings, Grace Brethren Church: 490/432
MD, Waldorf, Grace Brethren Church: 325/430
MI, Lake Odessa, Grace Brethren Church: 34/35
MI, Menominee, Menominee Grace Brethren Church: *
MN, Minneapolis, Twin Cities Church: 80/200
NC, Durham, Iglesia Cristiana La Cosecha: *
NC, Maddison, Greensboro Grace Brethren Church: *
NJ, Hope, Grace Community Church: 35/30
NM, Taos, Grace Brethren Church of Taos: *
NY, New York, New Horizon Church of New York: *
OH, Akron, Grace Church of Greater Akron - Bath Campus: 4405/583
OH, Ashland, Eastgate Bible Church: 50/
OH, Ashland, Eastgate Mansfield: *
OH, Ashland, Grace Brethren Church: 1085/733
OH, Ashland, Southview Grace Brethren Church: 187/198
OH, Ashland, Woodside Church: 10/10
OH, Blacklick, East Side Grace Brethren Church: 650/340
OH, Bowling Green, Grace Brethren Church: 50/25
OH, Brookville, Brookville Grace Brethren Church: 98/71
OH, Canton, Grace Brethren Church: 163/118
OH, Centerville, Centerville Grace: 183/n/a
OH, Clayton, Grace Bible Church: *
OH, Columbus, Capital City Grace Church: 25/37
OH, Covington, Friendship Grace Brethren Church: 62/71
OH, Danville, Grace Church: *
OH, Dayton, Basore Road Grace Brethren Church: 101/89
OH, Dayton, Calvary Grace Brethren Church of Dayton: 20/13
OH, Dayton, First Grace Brethren Church: 116/171
OH, Dayton, North Riverdale Grace Brethren Church: 12/25
OH, Delaware, Delaware Grace: 581/358
OH, Dublin, Encounter Church: 78/78
OH, Dublin, Grupo Amor Cristiano: *
OH, Dublin, Northwest Chapel Grace Brethren Church: 420/
OH, Fremont, Grace Community Church of Fremont: 1818/1568
OH, Greenville, Greenville Grace Brethren Church: 304/194
OH, Grove City, Grace Chapel: *

OH,Grove City,Southwest Grace Brethren Church: 59/68
 OH,Hilliard,Movement Church: 155/n/a
 OH,Homerville,Grace Brethren Church of Homerville: 118/111
 OH,Huber Heights,Grace Community Church: 179/151
 OH,Jacksontown,Grace Brethren Church of Jacksontown: 10/6
 OH,Johnstown,White Stone: 8/
 OH,Kettering,Calvary Grace Brethren Church: 28/28
 OH,Lexington,Grace Brethren Church: 74/85
 OH,London,London Grace: *
 OH,Macedonia,Western Reserve Grace Church: 505/228
 OH,Mansfield,Woodville Grace Brethren Church: 180/103
 OH,Marion,Marion Grace: 82/52
 OH,Marysville,Marysville Grace Brethren Church: 871/274
 OH,Maumee,Maumee Valley Church: 70/n/
 OH,Middlebranch,Grace Brethren Church: 137/90
 OH,Millersburg,Grace Brethren Church of Millersburg: 45/27
 OH,Minerva,Grace Chapel: 458/273
 OH,Mt. Sterling,Sterling Grace Brethren Church: *
 OH,Mt. Vernon,Grace Community Church: *
 OH,Pataskala,Pataskala Grace Church: 151/99
 OH,Pickerington,Grace Fellowship - Pickerington Campus: 251/9
 OH,Plain City,Darby Grace Brethren Church: 55/38
 OH,Powell,Grace Church: 804/
 OH,Rittman,Grace Brethren Church: 134/110
 OH,Tipp City,The Bridge: n/a/
 OH,Toledo,Total Grace Brethren Church: 29/39
 OH,Twinsburg,LifeSprings: 12/12
 OH,Union City,DayStar Grace Brethren: 30/n/a
 OH,West Alexandria,Grace Brethren Community Church: 35/98
 OH,West Milton,Community Grace Brethren Church: *
 OH,Westerville,Grace Polaris Church: 1475/948
 OH,Wooster,Grace Church : 2044/1475
 ONT,Mississauga,Renew Church - Meadowvale: 166/102
 PA,Altoona,First Grace Brethren Church: 32/46
 PA,Armagh,Valley Grace Brethren Church: 37/50
 PA,Avis,Grace Fellowship: *
 PA,Bethlehem,Lehigh Valley Grace Brethren Church: 96/100
 PA,Blain,Grace Brethren Church of Sherman's Valley: 23/20
 PA,Chambersburg,Grace Brethren Church: 5/5
 PA,Chambersburg,Solid Rock Community Church: 5/5
 PA,Coatesville,Encuentro Latino: /
 PA,Conemaugh,Conemaugh Grace Brethren Church: 38/29
 PA,Coopersburg,Family Life Fellowship: 20/25
 PA,Dillsburg,Hope Grace Brethren Church: 74/
 PA,Duncansville,Grace Fellowship Church: 328/172
 PA,Elizabethtown,Grace Brethren Church: 126/109
 PA,Ephrata,Ephrata Area Grace Brethren Church: 90/54
 PA,Everett,Community Grace Brethren Church: 202/150
 PA,Everett,Everett Grace Brethren Church: 69/63
 PA,Greencastle,Community Grace: *
 PA,Hollidaysburg,Vicksburg Grace Brethren Church: 60/n/r
 PA,Hopewell,Hopewell Grace Brethren Church: 71/53
 PA,Johnstown,Davidsville Community Church: *
 PA,Johnstown,Johnstown Grace Brethren Church: 32/49
 PA,Johnstown,Liberty Grace Brethren Church: 175/50
 PA,Johnstown,Pike Grace Brethren Church: 156/130
 PA,Johnstown,Singer Hill Grace Brethren Church: 112/113
 PA,Kittanning,Grace Brethren Church of W. Kittanning: 96/82
 PA,Lancaster,Grace Church at Willow Valley: 327/169
 PA,Lititz,Grace Church of Lititz: 453/517
 PA,Loganville,Community Cornerstone Church: 46/14
 PA,Manheim,Manheim Grace Brethren Church: 98/68
 PA,Martinsburg,Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church: 419/297
 PA,Meyersdale,Meyersdale Grace Brethren Church: 150/156
 PA,Meyersdale,Summit Mills Grace Brethren Church: 99/106
 PA,Myerstown,New Beginnings Grace Brethren Church: 156/119
 PA,New Holland,Grace Family Church: 158/115
 PA,Palmyra,Grace Brethren Church: 209/88
 PA,Parkesburg,Gateway Grace Community Church - Parkesburg Campus: 476/232
 PA,Philadelphia,Crossroads Community Church of Philadelphia - Holmesburg: 95/n/a
 PA,Philadelphia,Grace Community Bible Church: 70/45
 PA,Pottstown,Still Waters Home Churches & Worship Center: *
 PA,Red Hill,Hope Valley Community Church: *
 PA,Reedsville,Kish Valley Grace Brethren Church: 198/133
 PA,Saxton,Living Hope Grace Brethren Church: 45/n/r
 PA,Telford,Penn Valley Church Multi-Site Network HQ: 517/329
 PA,Tremont,Echo Valley Grace Brethren Church: 90/60
 PA,Uniontown,Grace Brethren Church: 70/n/a
 PA,Waynesboro,Grace: 93/66
 PA,Wrightsville,Susquehanna Grace Community Church: 86/35
 PA,York,Grace Brethren Church: 90/70
 SC,Aiken,Grace Church: 238/147
 SC,Anderson,Grace Fellowship Church: 33/35
 TN,Johnson City,Fountain of Life Bible Church: *
 TX,Longview,Grace Brethren Church: 46/24
 TX,McAllen,McAllen Grace Brethren Church: 25/5
 VA,Alexandria,Grace Brethren Church: 52/49
 VA,Buena Vista,First Brethren Church: 125/177
 VA,Covington,Grace Brethren Church: 32/41
 VA,Norfolk,Awaken Church: 74/104
 VA,Radford,Fairlawn Grace Brethren Church: 50/84
 VA,Richmond,Community of Grace Church: 90/48
 VA,Riner,Riner Grace Brethren Church: 25/28
 VA,Roanoke,Clearbrook Grace Brethren Church: 24/30
 VA,Roanoke,Ghent Grace Brethren Church: 63/56
 VA,Roanoke,Hope Bible Church: 80/127
 VA,Roanoke,Washington Heights Grace Brethren: *
 VA,Virginia Beach,Grace Community Church: 15/13
 VA,Winchester,Blue Ridge Grace Brethren Church: 81/80
 VA,Winchester,Winchester Grace Brethren Church: *
 WA,Goldendale,Community Grace Brethren Church: 131/62
 WA,Grandview,Iglesia Vida Nueva: *
 WA,Harrah,Harrah Grace Brethren Church: 32/34
 WA,Kent,Grace Fellowship of Kent: 45/n/r
 WA,Mabton,Grace Brethren Church: 78/49
 WA,Mabton,Iglesia De Los Hermanos: *
 WA,Sunnyside,Grace Brethren Church: 165/120
 WA,Toppenish,Grace Brethren Church: 50/32
 WA,Yakima,Iglesia De Los Hermanos en Yakima: 50/40
 WV,Grafton,First Grace Brethren Church: 60/60
 WV,Martinsburg,Rosemont Grace Brethren Church: 71/nr
 WV,Parkersburg,Grace Brethren Church: 26/14
 Count = 238
 (* = statistical report and/or fellowship fee not returned in time for this report)

Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches

Statement of Financial Position

31-Oct-15

ASSETS

Cash	\$ 117,191
Accounts Receivable - net of allowance	9,569
GBIF Investment	
Receivables	
Prepaid Expenses	10,011
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 136,771</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 10,467
Accrued Payroll Expense	1,446
Deferred Revenue	11,600
Pension Liability, current portion	1,072
Pension Liability, long-term portion	2,769
Escrow Funds	88
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$ 27,442</u>

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$ 96,344
Temporarily Restricted	12,985

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

\$ 136,771

Statement of Activities

Year ending October 31, 2015

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Revenues

Membership Fees	\$ 196,043
Conference Income	117,708
Eagle Commission	61,449
Contributions	112,874
Focus Retreats	52,192
Handbook Income	3,500
Other Income	435
Net Assets Released from Use Restriction	16,269
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 560,470</u>

Expenses

Program Services	
Conference	\$ 179,981
Focus Retreats	72,050
Eagle Commission	67,618
Supporting Services	
Fellowship Council	82,446
General Administration	159,518
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 561,613</u>

Increase (Decrease) in Unrestricted net assets \$ (1,143)

Increase (Decrease) in Temporarily Restricted net assets (3,284)

Net Assets at Beginning of Year 113,756

Net Assets at End of Year \$ 109,329

Notes:

Payroll expenses are allocated to Conference, Focus Retreat and General Admin exp. Categories.

Reviewed by Himes and Krull, LLC

Report #4

2016 Report of the Social Concerns Committee

The Social Concerns Committee is a creation of the National Conference of the FGBC. It was originally established in 1980 as the “Sanctity of Life Committee. In 1985 the committee was renamed the “Social Concerns Committee” in recognition of the need to address additional issues where biblical teaching and Christian ethics and theology intersect with societal and governmental issues.

The Committee watches religious freedom issues very closely. We are thankful for the religious freedom that is an ideal of the Western World. At the same time, we must be vigilant when this freedom is under challenge. Today we find Christianity in particular and religion in general increasingly marginalized and pressured in our country. Phrases like “freedom of worship” reduces the scope that religious freedom ought to have. Efforts to require private Christian schools to conform to secular understandings of human sexuality are matters of serious concern.

Our challenge as Christians, ministers and churches is to be “salt and light” in our world in obedience to the scriptures and in tune with the particular social and governmental situation we experience. We must avoid the cultural withdrawal that characterized much of Evangelicalism in the 20th Century. We must also avoid any trends toward “America as God’s chosen nation.” We must affirm the uniqueness of Jesus’ gospel in a pluralistic context where other systems are free to exist. We must affirm the place of good government in God’s rule of the world. We must encourage citizenship and service. We must stand for religious liberty for all, not just for Christians.

The Social Concerns Committee’s ministry includes but is not limited to:

- Monitoring cultural and religious trends in America.
- Preparing “Resolutions” for consideration at the annual business meeting of the FGBC
- Seminars and Writings
- Regular communication to the pastors and other leaders of our churches through emails on current issues, thinking and challenges
- Responses to inquiries from churches and individuals on specific issues
- Assisting churches in social concerns activism
- Being an influence throughout our Fellowship to increase awareness, commitment and involvement
- Producing, with legal assistance, a model church policy on weddings.

Let us all devote ourselves to good Christian citizenship, to a strong and constructive church presence in our communities, to seeking the “shalom” of our communities, and to seeking to “love our neighbor as ourselves” via all the implications of what we call “Christian Social Concerns.”

Please contact the Social Concerns Committee if you have an interest in serving with us or whenever we can be of service to you. It is important for the committee to cover the whole range of appropriate issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald P. Shoemaker, Chairman

Mark Abel

Mark Combs

Mike Jentes

Jesús Muñoz

Richard Schnieders

John Teevan

Resolutions Proposed to the 2016 Business Session of The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches Prepared by the FGBC Social Concerns Committee

Protection of Human Life

Human life is sacred before God and receives his explicit protections in Scripture. Human life is precious and deserving of protection from conception through death. Abortion and legalized “mercy killing” are contrary to the Bible’s pro-life ethic. While those who are terminally ill deserve appropriate medical care, including palliative care and pain management, medically assisted suicide is not a moral option.

Definition of Marriage

When Jesus taught on marriage (Mark 10:6-9) he said (1) “God made them male and female” (Genesis 1:27) and (2) “the two will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Thereby, a new bond is formed intended for a lifetime (Mark 7:8-9). Without the two realities of heterosexuality and covenant union, no true marriage bond has been created. Jesus spoke to oppose the easy divorce culture of his time. His words continue to be relevant to that and as a critique of new definitions of marriage.

We affirm, based on Jesus’ teaching and the broad teaching of Scripture, that marriage is intended by God as a life-long covenant between one man and one woman.

The Mass Killing in Orlando

On June 12, 2016 forty-nine people were killed and another fifty-three wounded at a nightclub frequented by the LGBT community in Orlando, Florida. This is the worst mass murder and act of terrorism in the United States since “9/11”.

As human beings made in the image and likeness of God, these victims did not deserve this violence. They deserve the dignity and honor and protection that flow from creation in God’s image (Genesis 1:27 and 9:6). We do not believe the Bible condones same-sex sexual relationships. Regardless of this conviction, we do not believe that acts of sin cancel out anyone’s basic human rights, including their right to life and safety.

Leaders of our government and of law enforcement should regard this incident as an act of terror committed in the name of the radical Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as both the perpetrator and ISIS so claimed, and move to protect Americans accordingly to the utmost of their ability. To ignore or minimize this reality and blame this attack on the Religious Right, on homophobia, on xenophobia, on immigration as it now exists in America, or on failure to legislate on gun control is to miss the most critical issue. Government leaders who do so thereby fail to exercise the leadership entrusted to them by God and the people.

Transgender Issues

“Transgender” issues have exploded onto our culture at a level scarcely imaginable a very few years ago.

“Transgender” is an elastic term describing those whose sexual identities cross over, move between, or challenge the sexual borders which activist claim are simply social constructions.

We recognize that the Fall of Humanity (Genesis 3: Romans 8:20-22) brings many forms of dysfunction into our human experience—physical, psychological, relational, and more. This includes dysfunctions that touch human sexuality. The arms of the church should extend in love and understanding to all who struggle with the effects of human dysfunction. The church must minister to others in light of our human dysfunctions, to bring a measure of restoration and wholeness this side of Jesus’ return, when he will make all things new (Romans 8:18-25).

In the face of recent cultural understandings of human sexuality, we nonetheless believe that God made mankind male and female. This is a foundational statement on human identity. Gender is an essence of who we are, not a social construct open to ideological revision. We must not as a culture adopt a new version of the ancient heresy of Gnosticism, wherein there is a disconnect between the human body and the true self, and whereby human sexuality, including gender, is seen as fluid and flexible rather than assigned by God.

We further recognize a cultural shift that makes today’s transgender issues more than simply the right of individuals to chart their own course. A belief in a divinely-designed transcendental purpose for humanity is being replaced by the belief that marriage and sexuality and other features of our human existence lack a transcendent origin and are ours to define and live out as we choose. As in the first temptation, we wish to become wise and morally autonomous, so we can define good and evil apart from the will of our Creator.

Transgender issues today extend beyond personal decisions and move toward government policies and coercion at all levels. We disapprove of government regulations and policies that encourage neutrality and accommodation in transsexual issues and strongly oppose

any efforts to dictate policies and practices to religious organizations. We support the expectation of boys and girls (and their parents) that they will feel safe and secure and will have their right to privacy protected.

Estimates of the number of “transgender people” in our society hover around 0.3 percent. This is one per every 333 persons. It is therefore unreasonable and poor obedience to the command, “Love your neighbor as yourself” for the government to force cultural accommodation of transsexual people upon an entire nation.

Immigration Reform

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 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 is compassionate, realistic and just.

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. We deplore the present situation when our Federal Government is unable to resolve key immigration issues year after year.

Religious Freedom

We express concern over the erosion of genuine religious liberty around the world and even in the United States.

Religious freedom includes the right of religion-based institutions (schools, hospitals, charities and others) to operate free of government coercion in practicing their beliefs. This includes exemption from government laws and policies mandating coverage of abortion and contraception in health coverage and on what the state perceives as sexual discrimination.

Religious institutions should not be subject to burdensome, intrusive policies and should not be put on government lists that could potentially be used as “shame lists” by those who disagree with their religious convictions about human sexuality. Therefore we oppose legislation such as Senate Bill 1146, currently under consideration in California’s legislature.

Religious liberty must extend beyond the walls of the church (“freedom of worship”) to include the freedom of all religious people (not just clergy) to live out their beliefs in their personal, public and vocational lives.

The Social Concerns Committee: Donald P. Shoemaker, Chairman; Mark Abel; Mark Combs; Mike Jentes; Jesus Muños; Richard Schnieders; John Teevan

**FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES
RETIREMENT INVESTMENT PLAN
PO BOX 587
WINONA LAKE, IN 46590
574-267-5161**

Retirement Planning Committee

As of **June 30, 2016**, the total combined asset value of the Fellowship Retirement Investment Plan was **\$ 13,901,704.17**. Currently, we have **361** active participants in the plan.

Thirty-four investment options are available to plan participants. Quarterly, individual reports are sent on a timely basis.

Account information is available on-line via a secure website at www.oneamerica.com. Other enhancements have been made to the new bookkeeping system which is very user friendly. We have met with One America representatives to review our plan and discuss ways to improve our cooperative services.

As of **June 30, 2016**, our one retiree, Lois Schrock, "Promise of Honor" member, receives a monthly check of **\$89.32**.

Respectfully submitted:

Mr. Kenneth A. Seyfert, Chairman
kseyfert@gbif.com

Committee Members:

Mr. Tom Avey
Mr. Ryan Bowell
Mr. William Burby
Dr. James L. Custer
Mr. James W. Johnson

Coordinator of Administration:

Mrs. Linda Leonard

Highlights from the January 2016 Fellowship Council meeting.
Location – Seal Beach, California

Overview: Meetings began Wednesday evening the 27th with dinner and a season of prayer. Thursday, January 28th was for reports from our National Ministries and from the various commissions of the council. Friday concluded those reports and the council took action on recommendations.

Results (includes follow-up actions done by email):

1. The council unanimously approved motions to
 - a. recommend to the delegates at the 2016 annual business meeting that the FGBC accepts the invitation to become a charter member of the Charis Alliance.
 - b. recommend to the delegates at the 2016 annual business meeting that the FGBC endorses the Charis Commitment to Common Identity.
 - c. appoint Tim Hodge, Scott Avey, and Bartley Sawatsky to make a plan to implement the Charis Commitment to Common Identity and for a possible rebranding of the FGBC.
2. The follow churches were approved for membership in the FGBC (requires delegate approval)
 - a. Sterling GBC, Sterling AK
 - b. Impact Church, Coatesville, PA
 - c. Bow Island Community Bible Church, Bow Island, Alberta
 - d. The Fellowship Council accepted financial reports for 2015.
3. Since the Fellowship Council met applications for membership have been received for:
 - a. Grace Ranch of Ashland of Ohio (Nathan Wells)
 - b. St. Antoine Bible Church of Detroit, MI (Andy Shank)



KNOWING JESUS ... MAKING HIM KNOWN

May 10, 2016

Dear pastor,

I have some exciting news!

After a 3-year process involving thousands of Grace Brethren leaders from more than 20 countries, the Charis Alliance has been launched and the Charis Commitment to Common Identity was unanimously approved by delegates in Bangkok this past fall.

Enclosed is the Charis Commitment to Common Identity (plus an introductory page and footnotes). This historical document is significant by...

1. **centering** on Jesus. I love this lead sentence, "We declare that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God, is the only Savior and Lord. He is the center of our shared experience of true biblical unity."
2. **engaging** lots of young leaders.
3. **providing** an identity that connects us with other evangelicals while still identifying our unique history and understanding of the Bible.
4. **creating** an identity for the first ever global expression of the Grace Brethren movement. I was a delegate at the Charis gathering in Bangkok. It was amazing! I was watching history in the making!

What's next?

In January, the Fellowship Council met to consider the Charis Commitment to Common Identity. They will make the following recommendation at conference this summer:

It is the desire of the Fellowship Council that the Charis Commitment to Common Identity serve as the identity statement of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, and we encourage its use by our member churches, by the Association of Grace Brethren Ministers and by our national and cooperating organizations.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES
P.O. Box 384 · Winona Lake, IN 46590 · 574.269.1269 · www.fgbc.org

Toward that end...


1. The Fellowship Council recommends to the conference delegates in July 2016 that the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches become a charter member of the Charis Alliance and endorse the commitments to Common Identity and Mission. The Fellowship Council also recommends that the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches accept the benefits and responsibilities of membership and select three delegates to the alliance by August 2016.

2. The Fellowship Council recommends that the Charis Commitment to Common Identity be endorsed as the identity statement of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches and be used by our member churches, the Association of Grace Brethren Ministers, our national and cooperating organizations, and districts to train leaders and to communicate and explain our movement.

For more information, including a Q&A page, go to fgbc.org/page/charisalliance. We have enclosed the Charis Commitment to Common Identity and the Charis Alliance Charter.

Would you be willing to show this video in your church? vimeo.com/fgbc/whatischaris. It will help your folks understand the Charis Alliance better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bartley Sawatsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bartley" and last name "Sawatsky" clearly distinguishable.

Bartley Sawatsky
Executive Director, FGBC

The Charis Commitment to Common Identity

An Introduction

History

The Charis Movement, comprised of leaders and churches commonly known as Grace Brethren, traces its *family roots* back to Germany, where in 1708 a small group of sincere Christ-followers committed to form a church that would be faithful to the teachings of the New Testament. Yet we recognize that our *spiritual foundations* are built upon the broader work of godly men and women throughout history who have faithfully labored to interpret and apply God's truth. While different expressions of our beliefs have been drafted throughout our history, we have consistently affirmed our unwavering loyalty to Jesus Christ, the Living Word, and to Holy Scripture, the Written Word, as *our final authority* in all matters of faith and practice.

Throughout the centuries, our movement has known glorious times of progress and sad times of distraction over secondary issues. By the grace of God, today we are a global family of churches that shares a common commitment to understanding the *Word of God* (Biblical truth), to living as the *People of God* (Biblical relationships), and, to fulfilling the *Purposes of God* (Biblical mission). This threefold commitment is shared throughout the geographically and culturally diverse congregations that identify with us.

Format

The *Charis Commitment to Common Identity* is a summary of our biblical convictions, mutual commitments, and common practices. It is not intended to be a *complete expression* of what we believe and practice, nor is it intended to be the *final expression* of those beliefs and practices. Rather, it is a *current expression* of our ongoing quest to apply the unchanging truth of God's Word to the constantly changing realities and needs of our world. It is formatted around three "clusters" as follows:

1. The *Center* affirms our eternal loyalty to Jesus Christ, through whom we live and move and have our being;
2. The *Evangelical Core* outlines the convictions we share with those in the stream of historic orthodoxy and global evangelical communities that possess a high view of God and the Scriptures;
3. The *Charis Identity* summarizes the perspectives and practices shared among Grace Brethren churches and leaders around the world.

Uses

We encourage our leaders and churches to use this document in the following ways:

1. To encourage the next generation to understand, identify and engage together with us;
2. To train new disciples to grow and serve among us;
3. To orient those disciples who may wish to join us;
4. To strengthen the understanding and convictions of our leaders and members;
5. To help us relate appropriately to those with whom we form partnerships;
6. To discern which churches or groups of churches should form a part of our global movement.

We believe that any written document is a creation of man, and must be subject to continual discussion and improvement as we grow in our understanding of the Bible, which alone is the unchanging Word of God, as we seek to apply the Bible to our changing cultural context.

The Delegates of the Charis Alliance, meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, 2 – 6 November 2015

1. The Center

We declare that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God¹ as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God,² is the only Savior and Lord.³ He is the center of our shared experience of true biblical unity.

2. The Evangelical Core

We affirm our commitment to the following core truths of the Bible which we share with other genuine believers in Jesus Christ:

1. **The One True God** - There is one, and only one, true God,⁴ the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁵ He is the Creator and Lord of all,⁶ existing eternally in three persons, never less and never more - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁷
2. **The Lord Jesus Christ** - Jesus Christ is fully God, existing eternally.⁸ Everything was created by Him and for Him.⁹ His incarnation took place in the womb of a virgin.¹⁰ He became man,¹¹ but never sinned.¹² He died a substitutionary death to atone for sin,¹³ resurrected bodily,¹⁴ and ascended into heaven where He remains fully God and fully man,¹⁵ and is presently ministering¹⁶ until He comes again.¹⁷
3. **The Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit is fully God, existing eternally.¹⁸ He is a person,¹⁹ and was involved in Creation²⁰ and the inspiration of Scripture.²¹ His works of convicting²² and regenerating²³ are essential to the believer's salvation. Believers are entitled to the benefit and joy of being filled²⁴ and walking in the Spirit²⁵ for empowerment in Christian life, service, and mission.²⁶
4. **The Bible** - The sixty-six books, and only these, known as the Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God.²⁷ God's inspiration and superintendence of the writing of every word of the Bible²⁸ guarantees that what was written is His Word and therefore authoritative, true, and without error in the original manuscripts.²⁹ God preserves His Word,³⁰ which is powerful and effective to accomplish His purpose of salvation among all nations.³¹ God's Spirit illumines the minds of believers in every culture to understand and apply the unchanging truth of Scripture in fresh and relevant ways for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ.³²
5. **Humanity** - God created man and woman in His image.³³ As a result, all people are bearers of that image.³⁴ However, Adam's subsequent sin resulted in a condition of spiritual death³⁵ which all people since Adam have experienced,³⁶ marring the beauty of God's image in them in every facet of life. This condition of spiritual death³⁷ has rendered all people unable to save themselves,³⁸ and leads to physical death.³⁹ Therefore, new birth is necessary for salvation.⁴⁰
6. **Salvation** - The salvation brought by God is a complete and eternal salvation by His grace alone, received as the free gift of God through personal faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, as He declares believers righteous in Him.⁴¹
7. **Church** - There exists one true Church, which is called the Household of God,⁴² the Body of Christ,⁴³ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴ It is comprised of all true disciples of Jesus Christ and is created by the action of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ Tangible expressions of this true Church are found in local churches.⁴⁶
8. **Christian Life** - The believer is saved by faith alone.⁴⁷ The faith that saves is expected to produce obedience⁴⁸ and good works,⁴⁹ which are the products of the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ The dimensions of biblical ethics are both individual and social, and extend to every facet of life.⁵¹ God faithfully continues to finish the work of sanctification, which He initiated in the life of each believer⁵² with the goal of Christlikeness.⁵³

- 1 John 1:1-14
- 2 Matthew 5:17-18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 19:7-11
- 3 John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:9-11
- 4 Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5
- 5 Matthew 22:32; Acts 3:13
- 6 Genesis 1:1; Psalm 146:6; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17
- 7 Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22; 2 Corinthians 13:14
- 8 John 1:1-3; John 8:58; Titus 2:13
- 9 Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16
- 10 John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:29-35
- 11 Luke 2:52; John 19:28; Philippians 2:6-8
- 12 Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22
- 13 Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24-25
- 14 Luke 24:36-43; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
- 15 Acts 1:9; Hebrews 4:14
- 16 Ephesians 1:19-23; Hebrews 4:15-16
- 17 Acts 1:11
- 18 Acts 5:3-4
- 19 John 16:7-15
- 20 Genesis 1:2
- 21 2 Peter 1:21
- 22 John 16:8-11
- 23 Titus 3:5
- 24 Ephesians 5:18
- 25 Galatians 5:16
- 26 Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:16-21; Acts 1:8
- 27 Luke 24:25-27; 1 Peter 1:23-25
- 28 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21
- 29 Psalm 19:7-11
- 30 Psalm 119:89; Psalm 119:160
- 31 Romans 1:16; Romans 10:8-17; Romans 16:25-27
- 32 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Ephesians 1:17-23
- 33 Genesis 1:26-28
- 34 James 3:9
- 35 Genesis 3:1-24
- 36 Romans 5:12-19
- 37 Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3
- 38 Romans 8:6-8
- 39 Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12
- 40 John 1:12; John 3:3-5
- 41 Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:4-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 10:14
- 42 1 Peter 4:17; Ephesians 2:19-20; 1 Timothy 3:14-15
- 43 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22-23
- 44 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:21-22

45 1 Corinthians 12:13
 46 Hebrews 10:25; Galatians 1:2; Romans 16:4,5; Revelation 2:1,8,12,18; Revelation 3:1,7,14
 47 Romans 4:5
 48 Romans 1:5
 49 James 2:14-17; Titus 3:8
 50 Galatians 5:22,23
 51 Matthew 22:37-40; Colossians 3:17
 52 Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:12-13
 53 Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18
 54 Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22
 55 Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 1:21; Ephesians 3:10
 56 1 Peter 5:8,9; Revelation 12:1-10
 57 Ephesians 6:12
 58 1 John 3:8
 59 John 12:31; Romans 16:20; Revelation 2:10
 60 Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31
 61 John 5:28,29
 62 Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15
 63 John 3:16; John 6:47
 64 Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10
 65 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:3-5; Psalm 16:11
 66 Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:25-27
 67 1 Corinthians 2:14
 68 1 Corinthians 4:6
 69 Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Chronicles 12:32
 70 John 10:28,29; 1 Peter 1:3-5
 71 Romans 3:24; Romans 4:25
 72 Ephesians 1:3
 73 Romans 8:1
 74 1 Corinthians 12:13
 75 Ephesians 1:13
 76 Romans 8:11
 77 Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7,11
 78 Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47
 79 1 Corinthians 11:20,23-26; Luke 22:14-20; John 13:14; Jude 12
 80 James 5:13-16
 81 1 Timothy 4:14
 82 Acts 2:1; Acts 2:37-47
 83 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; John 14:3
 84 Zechariah 12; Romans 11:26-29
 85 Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4
 86 Revelation 19:11-16; Colossians 3:4
 87 Revelation 20:4
 88 1 Corinthians 15:24,25

9. **Angels, Satan, Demons** - God created a multitude of spiritual beings called “angels”.⁵⁴ Righteous angels continue to serve God and work both in the heavenly sphere and on earth.⁵⁵ By his disobedience, Satan, a fallen angel, became the adversary of God and God’s people,⁵⁶ carrying with him a procession of demons.⁵⁷ Jesus Christ has overcome Satan⁵⁸ so that the final judgment and doom of Satan and his demons are certain.⁵⁹
10. **Future Life** - The dead will have a conscious existence in eternity⁶⁰ and their bodies will be resurrected.⁶¹ Unbelievers, already under condemnation, will be sentenced to suffer eternal separation from God.⁶² Believers, already having been granted eternal life,⁶³ will be judged and rewarded according to their works,⁶⁴ and will experience a glorified, eternal existence in the presence of the Lord.⁶⁵

3. Our Charis Identity: The Shared Commitments of our Global Movement

A Summary of Additional Commitments to Biblical Truth

1. We seek to understand the intent of each biblical writer by using grammatical, historical, and contextual principles of interpretation,⁶⁶ focused on Christ, led by the Holy Spirit,⁶⁷ and oriented by grace. We accept the absolute authority of the Bible rather than that of creeds, traditions, or leaders.⁶⁸
2. We commit to an ongoing study, understanding and application of God’s unchanging truth in our constantly changing world, whether personal, social or cultural.⁶⁹
3. We affirm that true believers put their trust in Jesus Christ and are kept forever in the saving grace of God through His promises and His power.⁷⁰ Every believer has been eternally justified,⁷¹ blessed with all spiritual blessings,⁷² and set free from all condemnation.⁷³
4. We affirm that the Holy Spirit’s works of baptizing,⁷⁴ sealing⁷⁵ and indwelling⁷⁶ occur simultaneously with regeneration and are the possession of every true believer. The Holy Spirit gives each believer a unique combination of spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving God and people.⁷⁷
5. We affirm that Jesus Christ gave ordinances to the church:

Baptism testifies to the reality of our salvation and identifies us as disciples of the Triune God. We therefore encourage the practice of triune immersion.⁷⁸

Communion testifies to our justification, sanctification and glorification, which are accomplished through Jesus Christ. We therefore encourage the practice of these symbols: the bread and cup, the washing of feet and the sharing of a meal.⁷⁹
6. We encourage the practice of additional biblical symbolic actions, such as anointing with oil and prayer for the sick,⁸⁰ laying on of hands for ministry,⁸¹ etc.
7. We affirm that the Church began on a particular day of Pentecost when our ascended Lord sent His Spirit to the waiting disciples.⁸² The present Church age will come to an end when our Lord comes in the air to remove His Church from the earth⁸³ and fulfill His promises to Israel.⁸⁴ The second coming of Christ is the personal, physical, and visible return from heaven of Christ to earth⁸⁵ with His Church,⁸⁶ to establish His thousand-year reign⁸⁷ before instituting His eternal kingdom.⁸⁸

A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Relationships

1. We affirm that the Triune God serves as the perfect and ultimate model for human relationships.⁸⁹ As a result, each person has equal value yet different roles, which are expressed in loving unity.⁹⁰
2. We affirm that differences in gifts and ministries are a manifestation of the multifaceted grace of God.⁹¹ As a result, we encourage all believers to use their gifts in ways that promote the unity, growth and ministry of the local church.⁹²
3. We affirm our obligation to love and respect one another, and to practice the 'one another' exhortations. As a result, we commit to work together and to resolve our differences, for the good of individuals, churches and communities.⁹³
4. We affirm the responsibility of local churches to govern their own affairs⁹⁴ while urging those churches to live and serve in community and interdependency with other churches.⁹⁵
5. We affirm that the mandate and urgency to fulfill the Great Commission leads us to seek ways to cooperate with one another, and with likeminded Christians on the local, regional and global levels.⁹⁶

A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Mission

1. We affirm that God's plan for this age is best summarized in Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.⁹⁷ This includes the evangelistic call to reconciliation with God by means of the completed work of Christ and the lifelong pursuit of obedience to God by means of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸
2. We affirm that God's plan for this age includes the recognition, training and releasing of spiritually qualified and appropriately trained leaders.⁹⁹ While the specific gifts, abilities and responsibilities of leaders may vary, all leaders must serve as servants of God,¹⁰⁰ shepherds of God's people¹⁰¹ and stewards of God's resources.¹⁰²
3. We affirm that God's plan for this age is most fully expressed through establishing healthy churches. Although practices may vary between cultures, healthy local churches are comprised of believers in Christ who assume a mutual commitment to worship, learning, service, prayer and witness.¹⁰³
4. We affirm that God's plan for this age includes our responsibility to express the compassion of Christ through proclaiming the Gospel in words while loving in deeds.¹⁰⁴ We are committed to finding creative and practical ways to address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of a fallen humanity.¹⁰⁵

- 89 John 17:20-21
- 90 Ephesians 4:1-6
- 91 1Peter 4:10
- 92 Romans 12:3-8;
1Corinthians 12:12-27
- 93 The New Testament has over twenty 'one another' references.
Compare James 5:16;
Galatians 5:13 et al.
- 94 1Cor 5:12-13
- 95 1Corinthians 11:16
- 96 Compare Acts 18:24-28;
Romans 15:24-29
- 97 Matthew 28:18-20;
Romans 1:5
- 98 Romans 10:13-17;
1Corinthians 15:3-4;
2Corinthians 5:18-20;
Galatians 5:16
- 99 Acts 13:2,3
- 100 1Timothy 4:6
- 101 Acts 20:28; 1Peter 5:2
- 102 1Corinthians 4:1
- 103 Acts 2:41-47; Acts 14:21-28
- 104 1John 3:16-18
- 105 Acts 10:38; Titus 3:8;
James 2:1-9





Charis is a multinational network of Grace Brethren church planters and developers [Canada, 1996], whose values are defined by the pursuit of biblical truth, biblical relationships, and biblical mission [Argentina, 1999]. The delegates of the 2008 International Conference affirm the following **Commitment to Common Mission** and encourage the participation of the Grace Brethren churches worldwide:

Church planting

We affirm that the church is God's plan for this age and commit to mobilize our members and resources to plant new churches because:

- the Spirit of Jesus poured out upon the Church is the Spirit of Mission to the nations (Acts 2:1-42; 13:1-4)
- the Church is a fruitful community in which disciples are made (Acts 2:42-47; Eph 4:11-16)
- the Church calls the lost to be reconciled to Christ through its evangelistic efforts (2 Cor. 5:16-21)
- the Church displays the multifaceted wisdom of God (Eph 3:10-11)
- through the Church God is glorified in Christ Jesus (Eph 3:21)

Therefore, we call upon:

- every local church to reaffirm their God-given mandate to reproduce through a concentrated effort to make disciples and form new churches.
- every National Fellowship or Association of Grace Brethren Churches to designate 2010-2020 as the decade of multiplication in which every church will be mobilized to reproduce itself through planting one or more new churches.

Leadership training

We affirm that a leader is a person who influences others towards the fulfilment of defined objectives and is indispensable to the health and multiplication of the Church. We affirm that leadership training:

- Takes place under the responsibility of the local church
- Seeks the equal development of character, knowledge and skills according to giftedness.
- Is a life-long process involving mentors who share their example, values, convictions and experience
- Protects existing leaders from temptations such as pride, exhaustion, family neglect, immorality, isolation, through accountability and team work.

We call upon the churches:

- To develop culturally sensitive strategies and means to train leaders, creating a comprehensive set of tools to:
 - Proclaim the Gospel (from non-belief to salvation)
 - Teach the fundamentals (from salvation to baptism)
 - Enlist in ministry service (from baptism to service)
 - Train leaders according to gifting (from service to leadership)
 - Empower leaders to train others according to gifting (from leadership to coaching)
 - Encourage a life of wisdom (family & work ethics, etc.)
- To share these resources worldwide with appropriate training how to use them (objective, target, content, time, cost, required skill to teach them...).

Integrated ministries

We affirm that God has created human beings with physical, emotional and spiritual needs and that the Church expresses the compassion of Christ in proclaiming the Gospel while caring for various needs of mankind.

We call upon the Church to bless believers, strengthen churches and reach the lost by showing the works which reflect true faith (Jam 2.26):

- Assisting those in need,
- Promoting economic, family, and personal development,
- Encouraging the development of businesses with a missionary focus (Business As Mission)

We recognize that this is still an investigative avenue for mission. We encourage churches to deepen their theological understanding (cf. Charis paper) and further refine the principles governing holistic ministries.

The Charis Alliance – Charter

Purpose:

The Charis Alliance seeks to obey the Great Commission by promoting fellowship and cooperation on the regional and international levels among associations of churches that endorse the Charis Commitments to Common Identity and Mission.

Definitions of Membership:

1. Membership in the Charis Alliance is comprised of National Associations of Churches that endorse the Purpose Statement and commit to accepting the Benefits and Responsibilities of Membership.
2. To be considered an 'Association,' there must be at least three churches who enter a formal agreement to cooperate in matters of mutual concern. In most cases, these Associations enjoy legal status and represent our movement in their respective country.
3. Countries with fewer than three churches are encouraged to seek status as 'observers' in the Charis Alliance.

Benefits of Membership:

1. Opportunities for regular fellowship between leaders and churches that share a common commitment to biblical truth, biblical relationship and biblical mission;
2. Opportunities to cooperate in initiatives that promote church planting, leadership training and integrated ministries;
3. Opportunities to share human and material resources to meet crises and promote long-term development;
4. Opportunities to address matters of mutual interest and concern, and to speak with one voice to those outside of the Charis Alliance.

Responsibilities of Membership:

1. To pursue and promote the Commitments to Common Identity and Mission;
2. To respect the authority of member associations to govern their internal affairs;
3. To pray for the health and growth of leaders and churches associated with the Charis Alliance, and to consider how to bless and serve them;
4. To appoint representatives to the Charis Alliance Forum who are qualified to contribute to the health and growth of the Charis Alliance.

Renewal of Membership:

One year prior to meetings of the Charis Alliance Forum, all Member Associations will be required to demonstrate that they continue to meet the Definitions of Membership. The Executive Committee will establish and maintain a system to assist Associations that no longer meet the Definitions, and may determine to grant them provisional status, or if necessary, remove them from Membership.

Governance

Representatives: Each Member Association is encouraged to appoint representatives to the Charis Alliance Forum according to this formula: 3-10 churches – one representative; 11-99 churches – two representatives; 100 or more churches – three representatives. Each representative is entitled to voice and vote.

The Charis Alliance Forum: The Forum is responsible 1) to promote the purposes and goals of the Charis Alliance, 2) to establish and maintain requirements for membership, and 3) to appoint the Executive Committee. Assuming that the Charis Alliance is successful in raising funds, the Charis Alliance Forum will meet every five years.

The Executive Committee: The Executive Committee is responsible 1) to evaluate and approve petitions for membership, 2) to appoint Task Forces to address matters of common concern, 3) to create and administer a budget, 4) to plan and execute the meetings of the Charis Alliance Forum, 5) to speak on behalf of the Charis Alliance, and 6) other tasks as deemed necessary for the success and growth of the organization.

The Executive Committee will be comprised of two representatives from each region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America).

Due to their extensive engagement in the creation and growth of the Charis Alliance, Encompass World Partners is invited to appoint a member to the Executive Committee. Unless renewed, this invitation will expire in the year 2025.

Transition to a Formal Organization

The invitation to become a charter member of the Charis Alliance will be extended to the churches of the following countries:

Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Central African Republic, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Czech Republic, Chad, D.R. of Congo, England, France, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Ireland, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Congo, Sudan, Trinidad, Uruguay, United States of America.

To become a charter member, each country should meet the qualifications of an Association, and send a petition to the Transitional Steering Committee, including:

1. A statement of desire to become a member of the Charis Alliance;
2. A statement of endorsement of the Commitments to Common Identity and Mission;
3. A statement of acceptance of the Benefits and Responsibilities;
4. A statement which includes the name(s) of member(s) appointed to the Forum.

The deadline to submit a request to become a charter member is 31 December 2016.

The Transitional Steering Committee will evaluate and approve these requests. They will announce the names of the Charter Members and Representatives (members of the Charis Alliance Forum) no later than January 30, 2017.

The Transitional Steering Committee will be comprised of the ten current members of the Charis Steering Committee. This Committee will have authority to appoint members to serve in the place of any member who resigns. The Transitional Steering Committee will cease to exist when the Charis Alliance Forum appoints the Executive Committee.

2016 Fellowship Council Nominee Biographical Data

Region A



Jeff is lead Pastor at Norwalk, CA, GBC, since 2008. He has a BA from Grace College, 1989, and is near completion of a Masters in Biblical Counseling from The Masters College. Jeff and Lisa have been married for 28 years and have three adult children. Jeff and Lisa's home church is Peru, IN, GBC. Jeff's ministry at Norwalk focuses

on teaching, counseling, and evangelism/church planting. Norwalk is currently attempting a church plant in the Boyle Heights section of downtown Los Angeles. To relax, Jeff loves history, tennis, is a huge foodie, and loves to travel all over beautiful California seeing the sites.



Adam Copenhaver is pastor of the Grace Brethren Church in Mabton, Washington. He initially studied at Grace College (BA in 2001) and Grace Theological Seminary (MDiv in 2003), then later earned a ThM from Westminster Theological Seminary (2009) and a PhD from the University of Aberdeen (2012). Adam grew up in a Grace

Brethren church and has served in Grace Brethren churches in Indiana, Alaska, Washington, and Pennsylvania. As a pastor, his ministry focuses especially on the teaching about God's saving work in Christ and he strives to make Christ the center of the church's ministry and practice. He has written books on the theology of marriage and on translating Colossians, and he is currently writing a commentary on Colossians and Philemon for Kregel Publishers. Adam is proudly married to Susie, his wife of 15 years, and he has two boys, Simon and Calvin, as well as occasional foster children. Together, they enjoy reading, playing pinochle, hiking, and camping.

Region B



Doug grew up in western PA, graduated from Grace College (1996) and served as a Resident Director for five years while pursuing his Masters Degree at Grace Seminary. He also was part of four Operation Barnabas teams, with CE National, as a student and leader. Currently he is the Lead Pastor at Liberty Grace in Johnstown, PA

(12 years). Serving as the District Missions chairman and a Regional Representative for Vision USA, he has a passion for seeing churches planted and revitalized. In the community Doug serves the on the campus ministry board at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, the five year academic planning team for the school district, and the local Fellowship of Christian Athletes huddle. He enjoys being a high school football coach and an avid outdoorsman for relaxation. Doug is husband of 19 years to Kaye and father of Allyson, Jonathan and Madlyn,

Region B (continued)



Jeff is Pastor of Adult ministries at Grace Church in Powell. He has been on staff there for the last 18 years, serving in a variety of positions as the church grew from a congregation meeting in a school to now having a campus with two worship services. He currently oversees Men's and Women's ministries, as well as ministries caring for the congregation and singles. His passions include discipling men and raising up next-generation leaders, as well as ministering to those who have gone through divorce. He has been married to his wife, Sherry, for 40 years and they have two married sons and two grandchildren. Prior to coming on staff at Grace, Jeff worked for Ashland Chemical for over 20 years in a variety of technical positions. Jeff has ministered in a variety of ways with the Coordinating Team of the NCO District; leading Pastors' small groups, coordinating activities, working with the Licensure and Ordination committee to update process and procedures, and currently serving as Vice-moderator.

Region C



Pastor Doug Courter was born outside of Toledo Ohio and grew up with two older sisters and a younger brother. He received his B. A. degree from the University of Toledo and his Th.M from Grace Theological Seminary. He is currently finishing up his D. Min. degree from Grace. Doug is married to Barb and they have four children: Karen, David, Kellyann, and Benjamin and two grand-children, Josiah and Harper. Pastor Doug served as an associate pastor for fourteen years and a senior pastor for fourteen years prior to coming on staff at Valley Grace in 2011 as their Administrative pastor. Doug has many interests, but travel, golf, and computers are his main hobbies. He also teaches at Hagerstown Community College. He has held, and continues to hold, many national and district positions. He is currently the National Bible Quiz Director for the FGBC.

Why only one name from Region C? Districts have the privilege of nominating names to the Fellowship Council. This year, only the Mid-Atlantic District nominated (Doug Courter). The FGBC nominating committee can add names but they felt that there was sufficient representation from other districts in region C.