



## From our Executive Director, Clancy Cruise

Greetings from the Midwest! Access2017 in Fremont, Ohio promises to be a fantastic gathering of like-minded brothers and sisters who are committed to church planting, leadership development and integrated ministries. It'll be great to be in a local church setting once again. Fremont is a great example of having a huge impact on its community. Thanks again Fremont! We look forward to being part of your family for a few days. I hope all of you have had a chance to get signed up for a cohort. These counterpart conversations are going to be impactful. I'm confident you will takeaway many, many ideas

and most likely a new friend too.

There is a lot of interest and enthusiasm for moving our Identity Document forward and closer to full implementation. Our Fellowship Council has been working hard at formulating some motions for us to consider at our business meeting. We're also putting together a team that will craft position statements on various issues of culture, theology and practice for our fellowship and for the delegates to approve in the years ahead.

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 business meeting. Please make a special effort to be at this important meeting for what we hope will be an historic vote. Thanks so much for your service to our fellowship. See you soon!

Clancy

### Reports...

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### On separate pages:

- **Ballots**
- **Budget for 2018**

# **Agenda**

## **Tuesday, July 23 at 12:30 p.m.**

During the Tuesday luncheon, the FGBC corporation will convene briefly for a reading of proposed constitutional amendments.

## **Thursday, July 25 at 12:00 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) Executive Director's Address – Clancy Cruise
- 5) Recommendations of new member churches:
  - a) Main Street Church - Chelsea, Michigan
  - b) Layland Church - Layland, Ohio
  - c) Lexington Fox Hollow - Greenwich, Ohio
  - d) Ashland Village - Ashland, Ohio
- 6) New Resolutions
- 7) The 2018 Budget
- 8) Constitutional Amendments
- 9) Rebranding Report
- 10) Election Results

# Statistical Report for 2016

Presented to the 2017 Conference

(includes statistical reports received through July 1, 2017)

# of Churches in the FGBC (7/1/17)

# reporting statistics

Attendance

Small Group

Recorded Conversions

Baptisms

Total Members

2016	
Avg	Total
	238
	188
215	43,331
77	14,910
13	2,548
9	1,803
114	22,444

2015	2014	2013
238	249	250
194	194	
42,204	42,281	43,594
13,727	15,494	15,426
2,408	2,553	2,616
1,571	1,608	2,054
22,519	22,991	24,589

## Churches added since last report (5)

Sterling Grace Brethren Church of Sterling, AK

Impact Church of Coatesville PA

Bow Island Community Bible Church, Alberta

Grace Ranch of Ashland of Ohio

St. Antoine Bible Church of Detroit, MI

## Churches deleted since last report (4)

Withdrew IN,Flora,Grace Brethren Church

Closed NC,Maddison,Greensboro Grace Brethren Church

Closed PA,Coopersburg,Family Life Fellowship

Closed Impact Church of Coatesville PA

## Churches that were adopted since last report (1)

GA,Kennesaw,Grace Church at Town Center: 61/53

by Grace Church, Akron OH

## New churches - not yet members (6)

Legacy Church, Kendalville IN

Grace Fellowship, Brunswick MD

17th Ave Bible Church, Columbus OH

Cherokee Church, Cherokee NC

Almond Tree Inn, Greenwich OH

New Horizons Family Fellowship, Grover Beach CA

# FGBC MEMBER CHURCH LIST

(as of July 1, 2016)

Listed by: State, City, Church Name, 2016Avg. Worship Attendance/Membership

AB,Bow Island,Bow Island Community Bible Church: 30/12  
AB,Medicine Hat,Grasslands Church: 81/31  
AK,Anchorage,Dimond Grace Fellowship: 18/18  
AK,Eagle River,Eagle River Grace: 158/94  
AK,Kenai,Kenai Grace Brethren Church: \*  
AK,Soldotna,Peninsula Grace Brethren Church: 165/58  
AK,Sterling,Sterling Grace Brethren Church: 18/4  
AZ,Peoria,ValleyLife Grace Brethren Church: 52/70  
AZ,Tonalea,Native New Life Ministries: \*  
BC,Surrey,Philip Bryant: 85/51  
CA,Alta Loma,Grace Fellowship of Alta Loma: 32/41  
CA,Auburn,Auburn Grace Community Church: 700/152  
CA,Bellflower,Bellflower Brethren Church: 212/106  
CA,Canyon Lake,New Hope Community Church: \*  
CA,Cherry Valley,Grace Fellowship: 60/40  
CA,Chico,Chico Grace Brethren: 118/78  
CA,Lakewood,Iglesia Cristiana De la Comunidad: \*  
CA,Lancaster,Iglesia Cristiana La Cosecha: \*  
CA,Long Beach,Community Grace Brethren Church: 46/47  
CA,Long Beach,Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach: \*  
CA,Long Beach,Grace Cambodia Church: \*  
CA,Long Beach,Los Altos Grace Brethren Church: 160/132  
CA,Modesto,La Loma Grace Brethren Church: 93/  
CA,Norwalk,Grace Brethren Church of Norwalk: 105/76  
CA,Orange,Grace Church of Orange: 354/197  
CA,Rialto,Sunrise Mission: 195/40  
CA,Ripon,Ripon Grace Brethren Church: 190/168  
CA,San Diego,Grace Brethren Church: 36/27  
CA,Santa Ana,Maranatha Grace Brethren Church: 135/35  
CA,Seal Beach,Grace Community Church of Seal Beach: 369/376  
CA,Simi Valley,Grace Brethren Church: 430/229  
CA,South Pasadena,Grace Brethren Church of S. Pasadena: 85/42  
CA,Tracy,Grace Brethren Church Of Tracy: \*  
CA,Whittier,Community Grace Brethren Church: 63/27  
CA,Whittier,Grace Brethren Church of Whittier: 59/29  
CA,Yucca Valley,Grace Community Church: 44/20  
CO,Colorado Springs,Grace Brethren Church: 40/34  
CT,Wethersfield,CenterPoint Community Church: \*  
DC,Washington,About My Father's Business: 50/50  
FL,Brooksville,Grace Brethren Church: 55/43  
FL,Deerfield,Family Christian Community Center: 20 people/20 people  
FL,Fort Lauderdale,New Calvary Evangelical Church, Inc: 70/75  
FL,Fort Myers,Friendship Grace Brethren Church: 33/22  
FL,Fort Myers,Grace Brethren Church: 50/28  
FL,Lauderdale Lakes,Eglise Evangelique de la Paix: \*  
FL,Melbourne,Grace Brethren Church - Suntree: 75/50  
FL,Miami,Mispa Missionary Community Church: 60/60  
FL,North Miami,Église Chrétienne Rocher du Salut: \*  
FL,Ormond Beach,Grace Community Church: 41/30  
FL,Pinellas Park,Grace Brethren Church of Pinellas Park: 84/60  
FL,Port Richey,Gulfview Grace Brethren Church: 193/134  
FL,Sebring,Grace Church of Sebring: 295/91  
FL,Tampa,Iglesia Comunal Cristiana: 125/48  
FL,Valrico,Iglesia Comunal La Esperanza: 38/20  
HI,Mililani,Waipio Grace Brethren Church: \*  
HI,Waipahu,Grace Fellowship Hawaii: 388/147  
IA,Cedar Rapids,CR Grace Church: \*  
IA,Dallas Center,Dallas Center Grace Brethren Church: 23/24  
IA,Davenport,Grace Brethren Church: 18/18  
IA,Garwin,Carlton Brethren Church: 20/20  
IA,North English,Pleasant Grove Grace Brethren Church: 14/13  
IA,Waterloo,Grace Fellowship Church: 137/132  
IN,Berne,Bethel Brethren Church: 53/89  
IN,Columbia City,Community of Hope Grace Brethren Church: 145/39  
IN,Elkhart,Fuente de Vida Grace Bilingual Church: \*  
IN,Fort Wayne,Grace Brethren Church: 47/51  
IN,Goshen,Grace Community Church: 2350/424  
IN,Howe,Brighton Chapel Brethren Church: 281/139  
IN,Kokomo,Indian Heights Grace Brethren Church: 25/15  
IN,Leesburg,Leesburg Grace Brethren Church: 85/46  
IN,Osceola,Grace Brethren Church: 235/86  
IN,Union City,DayStar Grace Brethren Church: 25/30  
IN,Warsaw,Community Grace Brethren Church: 216/185  
IN,Winona Lake,Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church: 839/730  
KS,Portis,Grace Brethren Church of Portis: 72/47  
KS,Wichita,Grace Brethren Church of Wichita: \*  
KY,Clayhole,Clayhole Grace Brethren Church: \*  
KY,Hyden,Victory Mountain Grace Brethren Chapel: \*  
KY,Jackson,Happy Church: 75/55  
MA,Essex,North Shore Bible Church: 95/63  
MD,Clinton,Clinton Grace Brethren Church: 290/250  
MD,Easton,Mid-Shore Community Church: 22/20  
MD,Frederick,Grace Community Church: 176/  
MD,Hagerstown,Calvary Grace Brethren Church: 47/31  
MD,Hagerstown,Cornerstone Community Church: 63/55  
MD,Hagerstown,Maranatha Brethren Church: 143/137  
MD,Hagerstown,Valley Grace Brethren Church: 243/100  
MD,Lanham,Grace Brethren Church: 63/43  
MD,Leonardtown,The Point of Grace Church: 65/  
MD,McHenry,Grace Brethren Church: 10/4  
MD,Mechanicsville,Grace Chapel Ministries of Southern MD: 235/185  
MD,Owings,Grace Brethren Church: 487/427  
MD,Waldorf,Grace Brethren Church: \*  
MI,Lake Odessa,Grace Brethren Church: 31/36  
MI,Menominee,Menominee Grace Brethren Church: \*  
MN,St. Paul,Twin Cities Church: 230/230  
NC,Durham,Iglesia Cristiana La Cosecha: \*  
NJ,Hope,Grace Community Church: \*  
NM,Taos,Grace Brethren Church of Taos: \*  
NY,New York,New Horizon Church of New York: 40/n/a  
OH,Akron,Grace Church of Greater Akron - Bath Campus: 4868/603  
OH,Ashland,Eastgate Bible Church: 45/70  
OH,Ashland,Eastgate Mansfield: \*  
OH,Ashland,Grace Brethren Church: 1075/716  
OH,Ashland,Grace Ranch: 20/20  
OH,Ashland,Southview Grace Brethren Church: 197/215  
OH,Ashland,St. Antoine: \*  
OH,Ashland,Woodside Church: 5/5  
OH,Blacklick,East Side Grace Brethren Church: 600/340  
OH,Bowling Green,Grace Church of Bowling Green: 40/24  
OH,Brookville,Brookville Grace Brethren Church: 102/70  
OH,Canton,Grace Brethren Church: 166/111  
OH,Centerville,Centerville Grace: 222/  
OH,Clayton,Grace Bible Church: \*  
OH,Columbus,Capital City Grace Church: 25/43  
OH,Covington,Friendship Grace Brethren Church: 60/70  
OH,Danville,Grace Church: \*  
OH,Dayton,Basore Road Grace Brethren Church: 67/78  
OH,Dayton,Calvary Grace Brethren Church of Dayton: 17/13  
OH,Dayton,First Grace Brethren Church: 120/175  
OH,Dayton,North Riverdale Grace Brethren Church: 11/  
OH,Delaware,Delaware Grace: 505/163  
OH,Dublin,Encounter Church: 95/n/a  
OH,Dublin,Grupo Amor Cristiano: \*  
OH,Dublin,Northwest Chapel Grace Brethren Church: 400/130  
OH,Fremont,Grace Community Church of Fremont: 1842/1658

OH, Greenville, Greenville Grace Brethren Church: 350/180  
OH, Grove City, Grace Chapel: \*  
OH, Grove City, Southwest Grace Brethren Church: 63/82  
OH, Hilliard, Movement Church: 185/40  
OH, Homerville, Grace Brethren Church of Homerville: 105/115  
OH, Huber Heights, Grace Community Church: 181/157  
OH, Jacksontown, Grace Brethren Church of Jacksontown: 10/4  
OH, Kettering, Calvary Grace Brethren Church: 29/29  
OH, Lexington, Grace Brethren Church: 85/n/a  
OH, London, London Grace: \*  
OH, Macedonia, Western Reserve Grace Church: 610/242  
OH, Mansfield, Woodville Grace Brethren Church: 175/105  
OH, Marion, Marion Grace: 80/55  
OH, Marysville, Marysville Grace Brethren Church: 948/285  
OH, Maumee, Maumee Valley Church: 65/n/a  
OH, Middlebranch, Grace Brethren Church: 146/89  
OH, Millersburg, Grace Brethren Church of Millersburg: \*  
OH, Minerva, Grace Chapel: 453/478  
OH, Mt. Sterling, Sterling Grace Brethren Church: \*  
OH, Mt. Vernon, Grace Community Church: \*  
OH, Pataskala, Pataskala Grace Church: 153/95  
OH, Pickerington, Grace Fellowship - Pickerington Campus: 3026/n/a  
OH, Plain City, Darby Grace Brethren Church: 50/  
OH, Powell, Grace Church: 798/301  
OH, Reynoldsburg, White Stone: \*  
OH, Rittman, Grace Brethren Church: 125/111  
OH, Tipp City, The Bridge: 20/34 \*NoStaff Listed\*  
OH, Toledo, Total Grace Brethren Church: 30/21  
OH, Twinsburg, Life Springs: 14/14  
OH, West Alexandria, Grace Brethren Community Church: 33/101  
OH, West Milton, Community Grace Brethren Church: \*  
OH, Westerville, Grace Polaris Church: 1441/846  
OH, Wooster, Grace Church : 2204/1569  
ONT, Mississauga, Renew Church - ONTARIO: 338/175  
PA, Altoona, First Grace Brethren Church: 32/55  
PA, Armagh, Valley Grace Brethren Church: 36/48  
PA, Avis, Grace Fellowship: 78/82  
PA, Bethlehem, Lehigh Valley Grace Brethren Church: 92/86  
PA, Blain, Grace Brethren Church of Sherman's Valley: 20/20  
PA, Chambersburg, Grace Brethren Church: 77/42  
PA, Chambersburg, Solid Rock Community Church: 5/5  
PA, Coatesville, Encuentro Latino: 30/30  
PA, Conemaugh, Conemaugh Grace Brethren Church: 38/30  
PA, Dillsburg, Hope Grace Brethren Church: 188/112  
PA, Duncansville, Grace Fellowship Church: 421/n/a  
PA, Elizabethtown, Grace Brethren Church: 130/108  
PA, Ephrata, Ephrata Area Grace Brethren Church: 89/56  
PA, Everett, Community Grace Brethren Church: 207/165  
PA, Everett, Everett Grace Brethren Church: 75/85  
PA, Greencastle, Community Grace: 40/75  
PA, Hollidaysburg, Vicksburg Grace Brethren Church: 55/n/r  
PA, Hopewell, Hopewell Grace Brethren Church: 64/54  
PA, Johnstown, Davidsville Community Church: \*  
PA, Johnstown, Johnstown Grace Brethren Church: \*  
PA, Johnstown, Liberty Grace Brethren Church: 178/55  
PA, Johnstown, Pike Grace Brethren Church: 140/114  
PA, Johnstown, Singer Hill Grace Brethren Church: 109/108  
PA, Kittanning, Grace Brethren Church of W. Kittanning: 86/68  
PA, Lancaster, Grace Church at Willow Valley: 319/170  
PA, Lititz, Grace Church - Lititz Campus: 429/302  
PA, Loganville, Community Cornerstone Church: 38/15  
PA, Manheim, Manheim Grace Brethren Church: 113/75  
PA, Martinsburg, Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church: 498/313  
PA, Meyersdale, Meyersdale Grace Brethren Church: 163/163  
PA, Meyersdale, Summit Mills Grace Brethren Church: 90/104  
PA, Myerstown, New Beginnings Grace Brethren Church: 137/113  
PA, New Holland, Grace Family Church: 142/83  
PA, Palmyra, Grace Brethren Church: 187/94  
PA, Parkesburg, Gateway Grace Community Church - Parkesburg Campus: 487/260  
PA, Philadelphia, Crossroads Community Church of Philadelphia - Holmesburg: 115/n/a  
PA, Philadelphia, Grace Community Bible Church: 70/54  
PA, Pottstown, Still Waters Home Churches & Worship Center: \*  
PA, Red Hill, Hope Valley Community Church: \*  
PA, Reedsville, Kish Valley Grace Brethren Church: 213/138  
PA, Saxton, Living Hope Grace Brethren Church: 35/n/r  
PA, Telford, Penn Valley Church Multi-Site Network HQ: 600/340  
PA, Tremont, Echo Valley Grace Brethren Church: 83/53  
PA, Uniontown, Grace Brethren Church: 56/75  
PA, Waynesboro, Grace: 94/64  
PA, Wrightsville, Susquehanna Grace Community Church: 108/48  
PA, York, YGBC: 108/71  
SC, Aiken, Grace Church: 130/145  
SC, Anderson, Grace Fellowship Church: 42/39  
TN, Johnson City, Fountain of Life Bible Church: \*  
TX, Longview, Grace Brethren Church: 44/15  
TX, McAllen, McAllen Grace Brethren Church: 15/10  
VA, Alexandria, Grace Brethren Church: 40/42  
VA, Buena Vista, First Brethren Church: 125/177  
VA, Covington, Grace Brethren Church: 30/39  
VA, Norfolk, Awaken Church: 71/121  
VA, Radford, Fairlawn Grace Brethren Church: 45/83  
VA, Richmond, Community of Grace Church: 75/52  
VA, Riner, Riner Grace Brethren Church: 25/28  
VA, Roanoke, Clearbrook Grace Brethren Church: 22/30  
VA, Roanoke, Ghent Grace Brethren Church: 57/46  
VA, Roanoke, Hope Bible Church: \*  
VA, Roanoke, Washington Heights Grace Brethren: \* \*NoStaff Listed\*  
VA, Virginia Beach, Grace Community Church: 15/13  
VA, Winchester, Blue Ridge Grace Brethren Church: 78/78  
VA, Winchester, Winchester Grace Brethren Church: \*  
WA, Goldendale, Community Grace Brethren Church: 116/49  
WA, Grandview, Iglesia Vida Nueva: \*  
WA, Harrah, Harrah Grace Brethren Church: 29/34  
WA, Kent, Grace Fellowship of Kent: 43/n/r  
WA, Mabton, Grace Brethren Church: 74/48  
WA, Mabton, Iglesia De Los Hermanos: \*  
WA, Sunnyside, Grace Brethren Church: 160/175  
WA, Toppenish, Grace Brethren Church: 49/33  
WA, Yakima, Iglesia De Los Hermanos en Yakima: 45/n/a  
WV, Grafton, First Grace Brethren Church: 43/60  
WV, Martinsburg, Rosemont Grace Brethren Church: 75/74  
WV, Parkersburg, Grace Brethren Church: \*  
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-16

### ASSETS

Cash	\$ 100,133
Accounts Receivable - net of allowance	15,135
GBIF Investment	207,515
Receivables	
Prepaid Expenses	1,830
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 324,613</u>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

#### Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 12,101
Accrued Payroll Expense	1,422
Deferred Revenue	5,785
Pension Liability, current portion	1,072
Pension Liability, long-term portion	2,590
Escrow Funds	
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$ 22,970</u>

### NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$ 301,643
Temporarily Restricted	

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$ 324,613</u>
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## Statement of Activities

Year ending October 31, 2016

### UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

#### Revenues

Membership Fees	\$ 211,966
Conference Income	121,367
Eagle Commission	59,402
Contributions	300,898
Focus Retreats	38,910
Handbook Income	4,100
Other Income	2,103
Net Assets Released from Use Restriction	12,985
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 751,731</u>

#### Expenses

Program Services	
Conference	\$ 174,786
Focus Retreats	86,578
Eagle Commission	63,841
Supporting Services	
Fellowship Council	78,360
General Administration	142,867
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 546,432</u>

Increase (Decrease) in Unrestricted net assets	\$ 205,299
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Increase (Decrease) in Temporarily Restricted net assets	(12,985)
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Net Assets at Beginning of Year	<u>109,329</u>
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Net Assets at End of Year	<u>\$ 301,643</u>
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### Notes:

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

Reviewed by Himes and Krull, LLC

Report #4

## **2017 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 assignment was broadened and 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.

This year we are pleased to add Kathryn MacMillan to our committee. She brings passion and expertise to many of our issues and is now a welcome member of the team.

We are thankful for the religious freedom that is an ideal of the Western World. At the same time, we must be watchful when this freedom is under challenge. Today we find Christianity in particular and religion in general increasingly marginalized and pressured in our country. As government grows, the church and parachurch ministries find themselves under more government expectations and mandates. As a form of “secular orthodoxy” settles into our society, churches and individual Christians find themselves opposed and marginalized for views and practices that were previously acceptable or at least tolerated.

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 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We must also avoid any trends toward a “theocratic America” or “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.

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 whenever we can be of service to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald P. Shoemaker, Chairman

Mark Abel, Mark Combs, Scott Henry, Mike Jentes, Kathryn MacMillan, Jesús Muñoz,

Richard Schnieders, John Teevan

# Resolutions Proposed to the 2017 Business Session of The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches Prepared by the FGBC Social Concerns Committee

## Essential Civility

Genuine civility moves past simple politeness or pragmatic concerns and sees those with whom we disagree as full equals before God. It does not allow the end to justify the means. Civility enables us to hold the respectful dialogues without which democratic decision-making is impossible. Civil people approach their government institutions with awe and gratitude. Civility is the negative duty not to do harm and the affirmative duty to do good.

Civility cares for one's own identity, needs and beliefs without degrading others in the process. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and asking others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of stopping to listen even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements.

**We call on our political leaders at all levels, from the White House to Congress to elected and appointed officials at all federal, state and local levels, to commit themselves to the practice of civility in what they say to others and how they treat others.** We look with alarm at the deterioration of communication, especially good face-to-face communication, in today's political climate.

"Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person..." With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be." (James 3:4-5b, 6a, 9-10 New International Version)

We call on political leaders, all of whom live under the capabilities of God's Common Grace, to be honest and respectful in their political rhetoric, and to duly honor other political leaders in spite of political differences and flaws. We urge communication that truthfully focuses on issues and avoids harmful *ad hominem* characterizations of people.

We condemn all acts of incivility, including outright violence and destruction, and denying others their constitutional right to free speech and freedom of association and assembly.

We call on our Fellowship to manifest the peace and love that has historically marked our German Baptist heritage, so we may be a witness to our world as we let our light shine. This heritage is honored in the National Park Service's description of the Dunker Church at the site of the Civil War's Battle of Antietam: "The Battle of Antietam, fought September 17, 1862, was one of the bloodiest battles in the history of this nation. Yet, one of the most noted landmarks on this great field of combat is a house of worship associated with peace and love. Indeed, the Dunker Church ranks as perhaps one of the most famous churches in American military history."

Sources: *Civility* by Stephen L. Carter (Harper Perennial, 1998);  
Institute for Civility in Government

## Religious Freedom

We express grave 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 (churches, schools, hospitals, charities and others) to operate free of government coercion in practicing their beliefs.

This includes the right of religion-based institutions to set doctrinal and moral expectations for their employees (not just for their ministers). We therefore strongly oppose the measure now before California's legislature (AB 569) that would prevent religiously affiliated institutions from setting any "code of conduct" or practicing any form of discipline on an employee with regard to procuring an abortion (euphemistically called "reproductive health care decisions"). The bill requires these institutions to put wording in their employment policies on an employee's rights and remedies in this matter.

Religious institutions that oppose abortion on biblical and moral grounds will therefore be speaking against it on the one hand while assisting it on the other.

**We urge our churches in California to vigorously oppose AB 569, and our other churches to oppose similar legislation elsewhere.**

**We further urge that churches and other religion-based institutions REFUSE TO COMPLY with the unrighteous, unjust requirements of measures like AB 569, should they become law.** The biblical basis for this civil disobedience is found in Daniel 3 (especially verses 16-18 and 28), Daniel 6:6-10; Acts 4:19; Acts 16:35-40.

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.

Through our prayers, education and activism, we commit ourselves to protecting religious liberty throughout the world in accord with Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

## 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 10:8-9). 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.

## Gender Identity Issues

“Gender Identity” is a phrase describing those whose sexual identities cross over, move between, or challenge the sexual identity borders which activists 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 experience 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 a gift of God.

We further recognize a cultural shift that makes today’s gender identity 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.

Gender identity 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 accommodation on gender identity 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.

## Immigration Reform

Recognizing that:

- a. All people are made in the Image of God,
- b. Respect for the rule of law, including its fair and just enforcement, 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.

## The Social Concerns Committee

Donald Shoemaker, Chairman  
Mark Abel  
Mark Combs  
Scott Henry  
Mike Jentes  
Kathryn MacMillan  
Jesus Muños  
Richard Schnieders  
John Teevan



# The Eagle Commission

Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches

P.O. Box 814, Winona Lake, IN 46590-0814 • Phone: (574) 267-5162 • Fax: (574) 269-4066

## Endorser's Report, July 2017

This year marks the beginning of transition in the office of the Endorsing Agent and the Eagle Commission. Dr. John Schumacher and his wife Martha have faithfully represented our fellowship for more than 22 years at the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs and across our Fellowship. During their years, the number of Grace Brethren chaplains serving our service members, their families and our veterans has doubled. This is an incredible testimony to their love and commitment to recruiting and supporting chaplains from our fellowship.

Our chaplains face has unique challenges of working within governmental systems and constraints, serving those who defend or have defended our nation's treasured freedoms of democracy, particularly our First Amendment rights of "freedom of religion." I am pleased to report that our chaplains continue to have great freedom to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to preach freely in chapels, to counsel biblically and to disciple those who make professions of faith.

Key events this year include:

- Colonel George Youstra, our senior Air Force chaplain, serves as the chaplain to the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon.
- Two of our senior Army chaplains, Colonel James Schaefer and Colonel Mark Penfold served as garrison chaplains at the Army's two largest basic training posts. Combined average worship attendance was over 6,000 soldiers plus services for Army families.
- Selection for promotion to the rank of Major for Chaplains Pete Stone and John Jacobsen.
- Accession to active duty for Chaplains Cameron Michael (to Ft Bragg, NC) and Jonas Winbolt (Joint Base Lewis McChord).
- Pastor Daniel Ruiz was accepted for active duty with the Air Force and will begin his training and assignment in August.

As the fellowship's new Endorsing Agent, I ask for your prayers and regular intercession for our 27 chaplains who serve our military and veterans (1 Timothy 2:1-4), that they will be faithful to the divine calling and always in the Lord's protection as they and their families minister to our nation's sons and daughters.

By grace,

Mark Penfold  
Chaplain (Colonel), US Army, retired  
Endorsing Agent, FGBC

**FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES  
RETIREMENT INVESTMENT PLAN  
PO BOX 634  
WINONA LAKE, IN 46590  
574-267-5163**

**Retirement Planning Committee**

As of **June 30, 2017**, the total combined asset value of the Fellowship Retirement Investment Plan was **\$16,081,137.14**. Currently, we have **370** 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](http://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, 2017**, 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](mailto:kseyfert@gbif.com)

Committee Members:

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

Administrative Assistant:

Mrs. Susan Lehman

**Highlights from the January 2017 Fellowship Council meeting.**  
**Location – Seal Beach, California**

Overview: Meetings began Wednesday evening February 1 with dinner and a season of prayer. Thursday, February 2 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. appoint Kathryn Macmillan to be a member of the Social Concerns committee.
  - b. appoint Colonel Mark Penfold to serve as the endorsing agent for the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches to the United States Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration effective June 1, 2017.
  - c. recommend amendments to the FGBC constitution: ARTICLE III Section Two and ARTICLE IV Section One and the addition of Article VI Section Five: Position Statements
2. The council continued discussion on
  - a. rebranding the FGBC.
  - b. 5-year transition plan for the Fellowship Coordinator position
  - c. Go2 Ministries and church planting in the FGBC.
3. Since the Fellowship Council met applications for membership have been received and recommended by the Fellowship Council for:
  - a. Main Street Church - Chelsea, Michigan
  - b. Layland Church - Layland, Ohio
  - c. Lexington Fox Hollow - Greenwich, Ohio
  - d. Ashland Village - Ashland, Ohio

# 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 God<sup>1</sup> as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God,<sup>2</sup> is the only Savior and Lord.<sup>3</sup> 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,<sup>4</sup> the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>5</sup> He is the Creator and Lord of all,<sup>6</sup> existing eternally in three persons, never less and never more - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>
2. **The Lord Jesus Christ** - Jesus Christ is fully God, existing eternally.<sup>8</sup> Everything was created by Him and for Him.<sup>9</sup> His incarnation took place in the womb of a virgin.<sup>10</sup> He became man,<sup>11</sup> but never sinned.<sup>12</sup> He died a substitutionary death to atone for sin,<sup>13</sup> resurrected bodily,<sup>14</sup> and ascended into heaven where He remains fully God and fully man,<sup>15</sup> and is presently ministering<sup>16</sup> until He comes again.<sup>17</sup>
3. **The Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit is fully God, existing eternally.<sup>18</sup> He is a person,<sup>19</sup> and was involved in Creation<sup>20</sup> and the inspiration of Scripture.<sup>21</sup> His works of convicting<sup>22</sup> and regenerating<sup>23</sup> are essential to the believer's salvation. Believers are entitled to the benefit and joy of being filled<sup>24</sup> and walking in the Spirit<sup>25</sup> for empowerment in Christian life, service, and mission.<sup>26</sup>
4. **The Bible** - The sixty-six books, and only these, known as the Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God.<sup>27</sup> God's inspiration and superintendence of the writing of every word of the Bible<sup>28</sup> guarantees that what was written is His Word and therefore authoritative, true, and without error in the original manuscripts.<sup>29</sup> God preserves His Word,<sup>30</sup> which is powerful and effective to accomplish His purpose of salvation among all nations.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>
5. **Humanity** - God created man and woman in His image.<sup>33</sup> As a result, all people are bearers of that image.<sup>34</sup> However, Adam's subsequent sin resulted in a condition of spiritual death<sup>35</sup> which all people since Adam have experienced,<sup>36</sup> marring the beauty of God's image in them in every facet of life. This condition of spiritual death<sup>37</sup> has rendered all people unable to save themselves,<sup>38</sup> and leads to physical death.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, new birth is necessary for salvation.<sup>40</sup>
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.<sup>41</sup>
7. **Church** - There exists one true Church, which is called the Household of God,<sup>42</sup> the Body of Christ,<sup>43</sup> and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup> It is comprised of all true disciples of Jesus Christ and is created by the action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>45</sup> Tangible expressions of this true Church are found in local churches.<sup>46</sup>
8. **Christian Life** - The believer is saved by faith alone.<sup>47</sup> The faith that saves is expected to produce obedience<sup>48</sup> and good works,<sup>49</sup> which are the products of the indwelling Holy Spirit.<sup>50</sup> The dimensions of biblical ethics are both individual and social, and extend to every facet of life.<sup>51</sup> God faithfully continues to finish the work of sanctification, which He initiated in the life of each believer<sup>52</sup> with the goal of Christlikeness.<sup>53</sup>

- 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”.<sup>54</sup> Righteous angels continue to serve God and work both in the heavenly sphere and on earth.<sup>55</sup> By his disobedience, Satan, a fallen angel, became the adversary of God and God’s people,<sup>56</sup> carrying with him a procession of demons.<sup>57</sup> Jesus Christ has overcome Satan<sup>58</sup> so that the final judgment and doom of Satan and his demons are certain.<sup>59</sup>
10. **Future Life** - The dead will have a conscious existence in eternity<sup>60</sup> and their bodies will be resurrected.<sup>61</sup> Unbelievers, already under condemnation, will be sentenced to suffer eternal separation from God.<sup>62</sup> Believers, already having been granted eternal life,<sup>63</sup> will be judged and rewarded according to their works,<sup>64</sup> and will experience a glorified, eternal existence in the presence of the Lord.<sup>65</sup>

## 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,<sup>66</sup> focused on Christ, led by the Holy Spirit,<sup>67</sup> and oriented by grace. We accept the absolute authority of the Bible rather than that of creeds, traditions, or leaders.<sup>68</sup>
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.<sup>69</sup>
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.<sup>70</sup> Every believer has been eternally justified,<sup>71</sup> blessed with all spiritual blessings,<sup>72</sup> and set free from all condemnation.<sup>73</sup>
4. We affirm that the Holy Spirit’s works of baptizing,<sup>74</sup> sealing<sup>75</sup> and indwelling<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup>
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.<sup>78</sup>

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.<sup>79</sup>
6. We encourage the practice of additional biblical symbolic actions, such as anointing with oil and prayer for the sick,<sup>80</sup> laying on of hands for ministry,<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> The present Church age will come to an end when our Lord comes in the air to remove His Church from the earth<sup>83</sup> and fulfill His promises to Israel.<sup>84</sup> The second coming of Christ is the personal, physical, and visible return from heaven of Christ to earth<sup>85</sup> with His Church,<sup>86</sup> to establish His thousand-year reign<sup>87</sup> before instituting His eternal kingdom.<sup>88</sup>

## 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.<sup>89</sup> As a result, each person has equal value yet different roles, which are expressed in loving unity.<sup>90</sup>
2. We affirm that differences in gifts and ministries are a manifestation of the multifaceted grace of God.<sup>91</sup> As a result, we encourage all believers to use their gifts in ways that promote the unity, growth and ministry of the local church.<sup>92</sup>
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.<sup>93</sup>
4. We affirm the responsibility of local churches to govern their own affairs<sup>94</sup> while urging those churches to live and serve in community and interdependency with other churches.<sup>95</sup>
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.<sup>96</sup>

## 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.<sup>97</sup> 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.<sup>98</sup>
2. We affirm that God's plan for this age includes the recognition, training and releasing of spiritually qualified and appropriately trained leaders.<sup>99</sup> While the specific gifts, abilities and responsibilities of leaders may vary, all leaders must serve as servants of God,<sup>100</sup> shepherds of God's people<sup>101</sup> and stewards of God's resources.<sup>102</sup>
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.<sup>103</sup>
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.<sup>104</sup> We are committed to finding creative and practical ways to address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of a fallen humanity.<sup>105</sup>

- 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





# Proposed Amendments to the FGBC Constitution

Presented to the Delegates at the 2017 annual corporation meeting of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.  
Requires a 2/3rds majority for approval.

*Motion #1: The Fellowship Council recommends to the delegates that they replace ARTICLE III Section Two of the Constitution with:*

Section Two. Identity Statement. The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches has a corporate commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God's revealed truth. Historical documents including The Message of the Brethren Ministry (1921) and the Statement of Faith (1969) helped to guide our growth and development for many years. The Charis Commitment to Common Identity (first adopted 2015) as approved by the national conference is the 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.

Individual churches who are members of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches Inc. remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, yet we share a common passion for Jesus, His truth, His mission, and His Church.

*AND ARTICLE IV Section One with:*

Section One. Requirements. Any congregation of believers desiring membership in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc., shall meet the following conditions:

1. It shall agree to cooperate harmoniously within the parameters outlined by the Charis Commitment to Common Identity and the Position Statements.
2. It shall actively pursue the purpose of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches as set forth in Article II.
3. It shall have a basic organization consisting of elder(s) and deacon(s), or similar responsible officers.
4. Requirements and responsibilities for local church membership shall be established by each church and shall not determine the church's membership in the Fellowship.
5. No church shall be denied membership in the corporation because of failure to support any institutions, ministries, or boards, either district, national, or cooperating recognized by the Fellowship.
6. Failure to comply with these corporate membership requirements may subject the church to dismissal.

*Motion #2: The Fellowship Council recommends to the delegates that they add Article VI Section Five to the Constitution:*

Position Statements. The Fellowship Council shall develop Position Statements deemed necessary and helpful for the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches to address or clarify specific issues of culture, theology, or practice within the ministry context of North America. Position Statements will require a 2/3rd vote of affirmation from delegates at the annual business meeting of the corporation. In addition, each Position Statement will require re-affirmation by the delegates every five years.

# 2017 Fellowship Council Nominee Biographical Data

## Region A



**Roger Holl:** Roger is the pastor of Sterling Grace Brethren Church and is an active long-time member of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. He is Executive Director of VisionAlaska, which is a FGBC Cooperating ministry. Its vision is to plant FGBC churches in regions of Alaska. He graduated from a Brethren College and later from law school. He served as an attorney for churches, Christian schools and missionary organizations. He also taught at the University of Alaska and was a college dean. He obtained his Doctor of Ministry and a PhD from Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary. Roger has a passion for reaching the unchurched with the Word of God in our changing world. He is married to Melissa Holl and has three adult sons. Roger is currently active in: pastoring, church planting and training others for church planting as well as church growth. He has provided legal counsel for churches and Christian mediation. [www.visionalaska.org](http://www.visionalaska.org)

## Region B



**Nathan Bryant:** Nathan has served as Executive Director of GB Canada and Executive Pastor of Grace Community Church, Mississauga, Ontario. Nathan Bryant grew up in rural Maine with 9 siblings – including twin, Philip – and served as an associate pastor at the Waldorf Grace Brethren Church in Maryland from 1993 to 1997 where he was ordained. Nathan became a career missionary with the Grace Brethren Fellowship in 1997 and subsequently served as team leader for the Canadian church planting ministry which eventually became GBCanada. He currently serves on the Executive Team of GBCanada USA with a focus on vision and strategy. He also functions as part of the pastoral team at Grace Community Church, the first Grace Brethren church planted in Canada in 1998. He was formerly a board member for the Grace Brethren Missionary Herald Company and served on The Fellowship Council of the FGBC. Nathan and his wife, Jennifer, have two young sons, Isaiah and Micah. Nathan enjoys basketball, watching football, talking about Jesus, church planting, and Kingdom expansion.



**Stephen Miller:** “It has been my privilege to serve alongside the people of Maumee Valley Church for the last 25 years. Being a third generation Grace Brethren pastor (R. Paul Miller Sr., R. Paul Miller Jr.) is a heritage that I cherish. My first step in the ministry was serving as an assistant to Dean Risser at Lexington Oh. After graduating from Dallas Seminary I also served with my father at Maitland GBC. Following several years at Pataskala we landed in Maumee Valley and have been here ever since. Building on our GBC heritage I hope we keep our roots strong as we grow in our ability to more effectively minister to the world.”

## Region B (continued)



**Dave Pacheco:** Dave is a long-time member of the Fellowship, having grown up in the Winona Lake GBC. He graduated from Grace College in 1995 and after an 8 year stint working in recruitment for Grace College, he returned to school and earned his Master's Degree in Professional Communication from Purdue University in 2005. He spent 3 years working at Wheaton Academy in the west suburbs of Chicago and then in 2008, he came to Delaware, OH to be the Student Ministries Pastor at Delaware Grace. Over the past 9 years, he has served in student ministries, adult ministries, and now as Interim Lead Pastor. Dave and his wife of 15 years, Esther, have two boys: Alexander (10), and Elijah (8). Dave enjoys almost any type of sport, whether participating or spectating. He loves to teach, laugh, be with people, and encourage those people to take the next step in their journey to and with Jesus.

## Region C



**Timothy Clothier** is married to his Grace College sweetheart, Carrie (Doutrich), and is the proud father of 4 children (Allegra, Adelaide, Toban, and Tucker.). He has been a part of the FGBC since 2003 and is privileged to serve as the Senior Pastor of Waynesboro Grace since 2014. Timothy holds a Bachelor degree in Youth Ministry from Grace College and a Masters Degree from Grace Theological Seminary. He was Ordained while serving as the Student Ministries Pastor at Community Grace of Warsaw (IN) and has led the Licensure/Ordination Teams for both the Heartland and Mid-Atlantic Districts. He is passionate about preaching the Bible, and leading people to love Jesus and purposefully live for him.



**Javier Forero:** Javier was born in Colombia, South America. He is married to Pily Forero and they have three kids: Mateo, Abbie, and Ellie. Javier is the Senior Pastor at Iglesia La Esperanza located in Valrico, Fla. He's been in this position for almost five years and also he is an active church planter.

Why only one name from Region A? Districts have the privilege of nominating names to the Fellowship Council. This year, only the Arctic district nominated (Roger Holl). The FGBC nominating committee can add names but they felt that there was sufficient representation from other districts in region A.

# 2018 Budget

		<b>2017 Budget</b>	
		Proposed	
<b>Revenues</b>			
(1)	Membership Fees	\$	215,000
(2)	Conference Income		50,000
(3)	Focus Retreats		45,000
(4)	Donations		135,000
	Other Income		500
<b>Total Revenue</b>		\$	445,500
<b>Expenses</b>			
	Program Services		
(2)	Conference		88,800
(3)	Focus Retreats		70,700
	Supporting Services		
(5)	Fellowship Council and Executive Director		139,500
	General Administration		146,500
<b>Total Expenses</b>		\$	445,500

## Footnotes

- (1) **Fellowship Fee Schedule**
- |                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
|                                    | Proposed    |
| Per attendee (before May 15)       | \$ 6.45     |
| Per attendee (after May 15)        | \$ 6.95     |
| Maximum per church (before May 15) | \$ 8,300.00 |
| Maximum per church (after May 15)  | \$ 8,800.00 |
- (2) **National Conference Income and Expenses**
- National Conference income and expense amounts will change with the size (attendance) of conference. The difference between these amounts is the amount of salaries allocated to conference from office staff salaries .
- Conference in 2018 will be priced to attract multiple staff and leaders from each church.
- (3) **Focus Retreat Income and Expenses**
- Focus Retreat income and expense amounts will change with the attendance at the retreats. The difference between these amounts is the allocation of salaries to focus retreats plus anticipated loss due to financial aid and operation costs.
- (4) **Donations: from National Ministries**
- National Ministries have voluntarily supported the National office since 1997. Additional funds have been given for the establishment of a moderators office since 2010
- (4) **Brotherhood/Estate gift**
- In fiscal 2016, the FGBC received a donation from Brotherhood Mutual... expected again in 2017
- In fiscal 2016, the FGBC received an estate gift. This budget proposes using a portion of that gift.
- (5) **Fellowship Council and Executive Directors Office Expenses**
- Fellowship Council expenses include the cost of annual meetings of the Council, Council initiative operational and ministry costs for the Moderator's office.