

Bedford Gospel Chapel Inc.
(Operating as Bedford Community Church)

APPENDIX A

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

WE BELIEVE:

1. That the Old and New Testament Scriptures are God-breathed and inerrant in the original language, are fully trustworthy and are our highest authority in all matters of doctrine and life.
2. In one God eternally existing in three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and that He fulfils His sovereign purposes (in creation, providence, revelation, redemption, judgement and the coming of His Kingdom) by calling out from the world a people united to Himself and to each other in love.
3. That Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly human, born of the virgin Mary; - as Servant, He is sinless, full of grace and truth; - as our only Mediator and Saviour, He died on the cross in our place, represents us to God, and redeems us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin; - as Victor over Satan and all his forces, He rose again from death with a glorious body, being taken up to be with His Father, one day returning personally in glory to establish His Kingdom.
4. In the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement; who makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that they must turn to Christ in repentance and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ; who through the new birth makes us partake in the life of the risen Christ and who is present within all believers, illuminating their minds to grasp the truth of Scripture, producing in them His fruit, transforming them into Christ's likeness, granting to them His gifts and empowering them for service in the world.
5. That though God made us in His own likeness and image, conferring on us dignity and worth and enabling us to respond to Himself, we now are members of a fallen race' we have all sinned and come short of His glory and are in need of salvation from sin.
6. That the Father has shown us His unconditional holy love in giving Jesus Christ, His only Son, for us, while through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to His wrath and condemnation; and has shown His grace by putting sinners right with Himself when they place their trust in His Son.
7. That all believers are members of the Body of Christ, being baptised by the Holy Spirit into His body at the moment of faith in Christ. All believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit which is an ongoing need for all believers and is to be sought repeatedly, to empower for worship, service and testimony.

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8. That the commission of Christ is to proclaim the Good News to all people, making them disciples, and teaching them to obey Him.
9. In the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved, the everlasting fellowship and joy of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.
10. That the command of Christ is to love our neighbours, resulting in service to the church and society, in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows, in reclaiming liberty from every kind of oppression; and in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world until He comes again.

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APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

CHURCH:

1. The Bedford Community Church is an autonomous New Testament Church dedicated to evangelism, discipleship and ministering to the local community. We are committed to seeing the establishment and development of such churches both locally and overseas.
2. The Assembly practices believers' baptism by immersion, on personal confession of faith and remembers the Lord's death in the Breaking of Bread on the first day of the week.
3. The Assembly practices corporate exercise of the priesthood of all believers, both male and female, in all aspects of the Church, where this practice is in harmony with the will of God, consistent with Holy Scripture and with good order in the church.
4. The church will practice charity and benevolence within the local community.

OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCH:

5. The government of the local church is in the Elders who are appointed in accordance with the constitution. Therefore, in any matters of doctrine, practice, education and discipline, the Elders will exercise the authority.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

6. Responsibility for discipline rests with all believers under the final authority exercised by the Elders. The responsibility for pastoral care lies with the Elders but should be exercised by all believers.
7. To accept the biblical pattern of shared responsibility in the life of the Assembly by:
 - (a) Regularly attending the worship service, which is the one weekly occasion our church's corporate life is fully expressed.
 - (b) Participating in the life of one of our small groups.
 - (c) Being involved in some form of service in the overall life of the church.
 - (d) Becoming a partner in other ministries that the church feels a call to support financially, and to take part in the financial responsibility for the upkeep of our own outreach and ministries through regular giving to the Assembly.

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THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

DOCTRINE

1. We believe in the Holy Spirit who:
 - convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement;

 - makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that they must turn to Christ in repentance and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ;

 - through the new birth, makes us partake in the life of the risen Christ; and

 - is present within all believers, illuminating their minds to grasp the truth of Scripture, producing in them His fruit, transforming them into Christ's likeness, granting to them His gifts and empowering them for service in the world.

2. We believe that all believers are members of the body of Christ, being baptised by the Holy Spirit into His body at the moment of faith in Christ and are also privileged and commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINE

3. The teaching of Scripture about spiritual gifts is outlined for us primarily in 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12.

These Scriptures indicate that:

- (a) God, in His grace, gives spiritual gifts to every believer. Every Christian has at least one gift but no one has all of them (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-26; Ephesians 4:7-13), so no one gift is essential or common for every believer.

- (b) We all have different gifts. There are varieties of gift for varieties of task (Romans 12:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:12-26; Ephesians 4:12). Gifts are related to responsibility. They are enablings for task. Gifts vary from person to person; from time to time and from situation to situation for the same person.

- (c) Spiritual gifts are always for the health and growth of the body, and never to boost individual ego. Their primary purposes are:
 - (1) to bring all believers to maturity and effectiveness in God's service (Romans 12);

 - (2) so that the Lord has a fully developed and equipped body which He can direct and use in any way (Ephesians 4:11-16); and

 - (3) to make the church unified (Ephesians 4:12), stabilised (Ephesians 4:14), open and honest (Ephesians 4:14) and bring glory to God (Ephesians 4:8).

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- (d) God gives spiritual gifts as He determines (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7). Since spiritual gifts are received, not achieved, the possession and exercise of a spiritual gift is not a sign of spiritual maturity which is indicated by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 4:22-26, i.e. having a character that is daily becoming more like Christ's).
- (e) The better the communication between church members, the better the gifts will develop. Ephesians 4:12 and 13 will be true if we recognise the gifts God has given; encourage their use and development and caution each other, if necessary.
- (f) Differences in gift do not exist to make us different from one another, but so that we make up one complete body. Within the body every At different times the exercise of one gift may be needed more than another gift (1 Corinthians 12:12-17).
- (g) All true believers are baptised by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), which is a once-for-all event which takes place when we first believe in Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14). This receiving of the Spirit (Romans 8:7) also involves the incorporation of a believer into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), and the sealing by the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) as a guarantee that the believer's salvation will be completed. These doctrinal truths, however, need to be validated in the believer's experience, through a consciousness of the Spirit's empowering in the daily realities of life.
- (h) All believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). The filling of the Spirit is an ongoing need for all believers and is to be sought repeatedly, as the occasion requires, to empower for worship, service and testimony. It is not a once-for-all experience nor a fixed state.
- (i) Since no Scripture teaches that any of the gifts have ceased, we conclude that all gifts are potentially available today, though, of course, it may well be that at a particular time or in a particular situation the Lord may choose to emphasise or de-emphasise a particular gift. Our responsibility is to make sure that we have not shut the door to any of His gifts if He wishes to give them.
- (j) Every believer should be open to receive God's gifts. Each one should seek to discover, develop and use any gift the Lord may, in His sovereignty, bestow upon them. While it is in order to pray for a gift or gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1), it should be realised that the giving of a gift is entirely of God's grace – it is His prerogative to give or to withhold. Therefore, if we ask for a particular gift and He does not give it to us, we must accept His decision and contentedly use the gifts He has given us. 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 specifically warns us against being envious of the gift(s) others have.

TOLERANCE

- 4. While not all church members have the same views on the gifts, it is important that we all exercise tolerance and understanding of others' views in this area. In particular, whatever your private views, it is importance that you do not suggest to any other believer they:

- (a) "ought" to have a particular gift which you possess; or

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- (b) “ought not” to have a particular gift because (in your personal view) such gifts have “passed away” or are inappropriate.

- 5. We have the privilege of being able to share and to learn from one another and in this matter the words of Mr W.E. Vine are very true. He said, “I believe that God has left some parts of Scripture purposefully vague to see if I love my opinion more that I love my brethren.”