



Redemption Bible Church I Membership Covenant

“...through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known...”
Ephesians 3:10

Introduction

The church exists to display the glory of God to the world. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God’s redemptive purposes in the world.

Since the beginning, God has been calling forth His people to display His glory in a grand narrative of redemption and reconciliation. Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, the gospel is the means by which the world is being made right. The gospel carries with it the promise of ultimate renewal, a restoration even more glorious than Eden, and thus believers eagerly anticipate the return of Christ. The Church Universal (i.e., all believers, everywhere) is the very means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (II Corinthians 5:17-20), the very means by which God is writing His beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation.

In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body (i.e., a particular group of believers in a particular locale) is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is a call to live out the unity of the redeemed through our love for God and love for others, both those within the family of God and those who are outside of Christ. The church is the gathering of the redeemed (Hebrews 10:24-25), the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), the bride of Jesus (Revelation 21:2,9), and the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-31).

Membership at Redemption is participation in a family, a body, a microcosm of the universal household of God. Because of this, we call our covenanted people “members” to emphasize the fact that we expect them to be far more than spectators. Redemption Bible Church holds its members in high regard. We expect them to joyfully be in the process of understanding and appropriating the truth of the gospel, that they might be centered on God in every part of life; recognizing and living out the identity-transforming power of the gospel, that they might live lives that are constantly defined by the grace of God; intentionally living out the mission of the gospel, that as missionaries to the world around them they might draw attention and bring glory to our risen Rescuer and Redeemer.

This membership covenant is birthed out of our love for Jesus, His bride the Church, and the people of Redemption. It’s primary purpose is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:

1. To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both individual membership of Redemption Bible Church body and the leadership of Redemption Bible Church.
2. To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Redemption Bible Church.
3. To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.



What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a promise; an agreement by which two or more parties obligate themselves to one another in order to perform certain duties or to live a certain way. Within the Scriptures we find a number of examples of covenants, some between God and man (Genesis 6, 9, 15; Ezekiel 20; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 31; Matthew 26), others solely between people (I Samuel 18; II Samuel 5). Some covenants are unconditional, meaning there is a pledge to be faithful to the covenant regardless of the other person's faithfulness. Other covenants are conditional, meaning that the obligation of one party is at least in part dependent upon the faithfulness of the other.

Though the membership covenant of Redemption Bible Church does define the relationship between members and the local church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His glory and His bride, the Church. Therefore, the heart of this membership covenant simply reiterates the biblical obligations of all Christians, whether partnered with a local church or not. For example, all Christians are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. It is assumed that Christians will follow these universal obligations even if the local church fails in its covenant obligations. In other words, these Christian duties are unconditional.

Certain aspects of this covenant, however, are conditioned upon the faithfulness of both parties. For example, if an individual member feels as though the leadership of Redemption Bible Church is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the leadership of the church. If the church elders have clearly broken covenant faithfulness and are unwilling to change, then the member is freed from his or her obligations to this particular church and is encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church's disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere.

Affirmation of Faith

The Scriptures

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

God is Triune

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-



existent, co-equal, co-eternal. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

God the Father

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By his word and for his glory, he freely and supernaturally created the world from nothing. Through the same Word he daily sustains all his creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and in his unfathomable grace gave his Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of his glory.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in him all things hold together by the word of his power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed his blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By his death in our place, he revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day he rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness, and for a period of 40 days appeared to more than 500 witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of his resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, he intercedes for his people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of his body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel he persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son, who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

Man

God made man—male and female—in his own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

The Gospel

Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, his resurrection is the power of the gospel, and his ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases his holy wrath. It also demonstrates his mysterious love and reveals his amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what he has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches, and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross.

Man's Response to the Gospel

Man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for his own pleasure and glory. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and, by God's grace, put saving faith in Christ. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become his disciple.

Man's Inheritance Through the Gospel

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and his substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes his child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and, via the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

Empowered by the Spirit

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced.

The Church

God by his Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, he guides



and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve him by faithfully doing his will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in all the world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church, in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God, and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries, all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry. Women play a vital role in the life of the church, but in keeping with God's created design they are not permitted "to teach or to exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12 ESV). Leadership in the church is male. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in his service in relation to one another and to the world.

Sacraments of the Church

Water baptism is intended only for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become his disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of his death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death, and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

The Consummation

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with him forever. Married to Christ as his Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever,



serving him and giving him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

Statement of Biblical Doctrine (Closed-Handed Issues)

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox belief from a biblical and historical perspective and should be universal to all followers of Christ. The explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Redemption Bible Church.

I believe:

- that the Scriptures are completely true, authoritative and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21).
- that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; 46:9-10; John 17:3; I Corinthians 8:4-6; I Timothy 2:5).
- that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; that the members of the Trinity are equal in nature yet distinct in their roles (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:17-20; I Corinthians 12:4-6).
- that I am, along with all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action, a sinner (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8,12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- that the deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:19; Romans 5:12; 6:23; James 1:14-15).
- that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin, is both fully God and fully human, and is without sin (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4,14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- that Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (John 1:29; 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; I Peter 3:18).
- that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 20-21; I Corinthians 15:12-34).
- that Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; I John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
- that only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can I be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3:18; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; I Timothy 2:5-6).



- in a future, physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

In addition to the above affirmations, Redemption members understand it is a responsibility of covenant membership to have read and agreed with the Redemption Affirmation of Faith (available at redemptionbiblechurch.org/about/what-we-believe/) that Redemption Bible Church will preach, teach, and counsel in accordance with these theological convictions, and that the member should address any questions, comments, or concerns regarding these doctrines to a pastor/elder.

Finally, statements of belief throughout history have often addressed concerns specific to the culture in which they were written. In our day we face a number of issues on which Scripture is clear and on which the Church must be unified. Therefore, members must agree with the following:

- Marriage is between one man and one woman. Sexual contact is only appropriate within the bounds of heterosexual, monogamous marriage. Homosexual acts and unions are sin.
- Co-habitation is not an acceptable lifestyle for unmarried couples, even if engaged.
- Men are called to be the Christ-like head of the home, leading in love, truth, righteousness, selflessness, and intimacy.

Open-Handed Issues

The member also understands that the leadership of Redemption Bible Church holds particular positions in the following areas (there are additional doctrinal requirements for leadership within Redemption Bible Church), but allows for differing positions to be held by members. We ask those in disagreement to study these issues thoughtfully, to agree to not be divisive, and to actively pursue unity and peace.

- The extent of God's sovereignty
- Predestination and election
- The timeline of creation (literal days vs. periods of time)
- God's active work in creation (i.e., theistic Darwinian evolution)
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Women and the role of pastor/elder
- Divorce and remarriage
- Views on eschatology (end times)

Biblical Obligations of Redemption Bible Church Elders to the Redemption Bible Church Body

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with humbly protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the church body and her individual members. The following is a rather comprehensive overview of the requirements for elders as spelled out within the Scriptures.

The elders covenant:

- to appoint elders and deacons according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4).
- to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the Spirit (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4).
- to care for the church, in part by praying for you regularly, and to seek her growth in grace, truth, and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1-4).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; I Timothy 4:16; II Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; I Timothy 1:3-7; I John 4:1).
- to lovingly exercise biblical discipline when necessary for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- to set an example for and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; I Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; I Peter 5:3).

Biblical Obligations of Redemption Members to the Redemption Bible Church Body

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Jesus through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as "living by the Spirit" (Romans 8). The requirements of this membership covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible yet non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

I covenant:

- to understand and adhere to the beliefs contained in the Redemption Affirmation of Faith as well as in this document and will not be divisive to the church's teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will diligently pursue and preserve unity and peace (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:7,17).
- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm

119; II Timothy 3:14-17; II Peter 1:19-21).

- to pursue and maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; I Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; I Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
 - by being baptized after my conversion (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Corinthians 12:13) and
 - by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion (Mark 14:22-25; I Corinthians 11:17-34).
- to regularly participate in the life of Redemption Bible Church by attending weekly gatherings, engaging in biblical community, serving those inside and outside of this church, living intentionally as a missionary to the people God has placed in my life, and living a life that glorifies Jesus (Acts 2:42-47; I Corinthians 10:31; II Corinthians 5:11-21; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14 I Peter 2:9-12).
- to steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts, and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 8-9; I Peter 4:10-11).
- to not function in leadership or as a member of another church family (Hebrews 13:17).
- by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to pursue holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I might live a new life (II Corinthians 5:17; I Peter 1:13-16; 4:1-3). Believers must strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death, while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. Below are a few examples addressed in the Scriptures:
 - I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity mean, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex, and pornography (Romans 13:11-14; I Corinthians 6:15-20; 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
 - I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Redemption Bible Church before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 6; 7:10-11).
 - I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip, and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32; 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).
- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, not condemning fellow



believers in areas where the Bible allows differing views and practices, and being careful not to create stumbling blocks for others in my own use of such freedom (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

- to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
 - humbly following the biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration, receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers, and
 - to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).

- to do the following when I sin:
 - confess my sin to God and to fellow believers,
 - repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; I John 1:6-10), and
 - to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church, being diligent to strive for unity and peace (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:5).