



## **ELDER'S STATEMENTS**

### **STATEMENT ON BAPTISM**

Trying to overly define the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) has been a source of unhappy division among Christians for hundreds of years. The elders of Bay Pointe Community Church are committed to address such matters with a tone of graciousness and humility, acknowledging that other Christian communities will differ in their understanding of biblical teaching. As important as the issue of baptism is to the life of the church, it is a gift God has given to the church to assure us of his love and forgiveness, not something with which to attack one another's doctrine.

Though denominations differ on many aspects, all Christian churches agree on two essential truths: First, baptism is the direct fulfillment of Jesus' command to his apostles to make disciples and baptize them (Matthew 28:19). Second, baptism represents both a public identification with Jesus as Lord and a commitment to his body, the church—his redemptive presence on earth.

The New Testament also teaches that baptism signifies cleansing from sin (1 Corinthians 6:11), dying and rising with Christ to a new life (Romans 6:3-5, Colossians 2:12), and the living water that the Holy Spirit brings to our lives (1 Corinthians 12:13). In summary, baptism represents an outward sign of the inner work of God's grace.

While the baptism of children is (and has been) widely practiced in the church, the elders of Bay Pointe have determined that baptism will be offered to those who have made a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. While we believe that children of believers are part of God's covenantal family by virtue of the relationship the parent(s) have with Jesus Christ, we believe it is best to reserve baptizing people until they have personally responded to Christ. We have arrived at this position for the following two reasons:

1. The baptism of believers is the clearly revealed pattern in the New Testament (see Acts 2:38-40, 8:12, 26-38; 10:47-48; 16:31-33; 18:8).
2. Bay Pointe has determined that it would more true to the spirit of biblical practice to wait until faith in Jesus Christ is personally understood and appropriated into their lives.

Finally, baptism is not a “suggestion.” It is commanded by Jesus himself. A baptism packet, including a DVD teaching on baptism, is available through the Bay Pointe office.

## **STATEMENT ON CHRISTIAN GIVING**

In both the Old and New Testament scripture makes it clear: God is the owner of everything (see Psalm 24:1). Out of God’s extravagant love he provides for us and entrusts to us resources to be managed to fulfill his purposes in the world. Stewarding the time, talents and financial resources entrusted to us by God was is an invitation to live in a trusting, dependent relationship with God, the supplier of all our needs (Phil 4:19).

As it pertains specifically to our finances, giving was never intended to be a duty or obligation. It has always been an expression of love for and trust in “Jehovah Jirah” - The Lord, our provider. Jesus promised that as we sought God’s kingdom first, all of life’s physical necessities would be met (Matthew 6:19-33).

If the motivation behind giving is to honor God and to live in a relationship of love, trust and dependence on God (see Proverbs 3:9-10) does the Bible give us any practical guidelines for what that looks like? YES! Going all the way back to Genesis 14 (vv. 18-24), the principle of the tithe—giving to God the first 10% of our wealth or income—was the standard God himself set (see also Leviticus 27:30, Numbers 18:21, Malachi 3:6-10). The tithe was collected and used to support God’s work among his people—to support the upkeep of the temple, the priesthood, etc.

It is worth noting that at the end of the Old Testament it was Israel’s refusal to honor God with their tithes that was a telltale sign of spiritual decay. Jesus taught that how we steward the wealth God has entrusted to us is an outward indicator of the true condition of our heart: “Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Although the New Testament does not explicitly mention the tithe as an ongoing standard, neither does it negate it. It may be assumed that the practice of tithing was a standard used by early believers, particularly since the early

believers were Jewish (and their Bible was the Old Testament).

In the New Testament we see giving tied to its original intent—as a way of honoring God, keeping Christ-followers in a dependent, trusting relationship with God, and to create resources to accomplish God’s redemptive work in the world. Passages such as Matthew 6:19-34, 19:16-30; Luke 9:23-25, 12:13-34, 16:1-13, 18:18-30; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37, 2 Corinthians 8-9, Philippians 4:10-20 provide additional teaching and application on how giving was lived out in the early church.

In summary, the principle of honoring God with the tithe—and beyond that living a life of generosity—has been a part of the Christian faith from the earliest days. We believe Christ-followers should give their tithes and offerings to the spiritual family (local church) where they worship and serve and receive the most direct benefit. Doing so ensures that the church has the resources to accomplish God’s redemptive work in the world. Beyond that, giving is a matter of individual conscience and conviction.

## **STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

Marriage is God’s gift to human beings, and His intent is for it to be permanent and intimate. Christian marriage is a copy of the covenantal relationship between God and His people. The man and the woman enter into a covenant together, blessed by God, whereby they promise to each other loyalty and intimacy. “The two become one.” While this is mystery, it involves more than the sexual relationship. It involves a oneness of heart, spirit, mind; it involves a resolve to face life together. God’s intent was that marriage be permanent, inviolate, and irrevocable.

However, we are a fallen people, living in a fallen world. Jesus, in Matt: 19:7-9 says that because of our ‘hardheartedness’ divorce is permitted.

Scriptures make allowance for divorce among Christ-followers in the following

cases as an accommodation to human frailty that protects the innocent party:

Divorce for the cause of immorality—with the understanding that the obligation to maintain or reinstate the marriage may not be imposed upon the innocent spouse (Matt. 19:9). Sexual immorality, especially where a pattern of it has occurred, violates the marriage covenantal promise of intimacy with one's spouse.

The second scriptural allowance for divorce is for desertion (1Cor. 7:15). While this scripture speaks to the issue of an unbelieving spouse leaving a believing spouse, our interpretation of this would include believers too. Desertion is defined as behavior equivalent to the abandonment of the marriage relationship. Thus the promise made in the covenant of marriage, the promise to be loyal to one's partner and to the marriage vow, made between husband and wife, is violated. There is more than one way of abandoning the relationship. For example, desertion would include things like sustained physical, mental, verbal and/or emotional abuse.

Divorce, like marriage, is the product of two persons who are both sinners. No matter where the fault lies, unless there has been a sufficient time of self-examination, reflection, brokenness, and learning, the party is not in a position to be married again. There needs to be a time of grieving, repentance, and healing.

Each case of divorce or remarriage will be dealt with in a way that is both consistent with scripture, and with God's unlimited capacity to forgive, heal, and restore broken lives.

The remarriage of believers in the church will be allowed except in the following cases:

1. When a person who is presently married is actively seeking a divorce for the explicit purpose of seeking a different mate. Such pre-intent makes the divorce adulterous.
- 2 .When there is no evidence of self-examination, repentance, brokenness over the circumstances that caused the divorce.
3. When the restoration of the original marriage remains a viable option.\*\*

The concerns above do not apply to divorces that occurred prior to a couple coming to faith in Christ.

\*\* Bay Pointe Community Church is committed to be to be a place where the covenantal nature of marriage is lifted up, and where good marriages are celebrated, weak marriages are strengthened, and immature marriages are grown up. Bay Pointe Community Church believes that persons wrestling with a

struggling marriage or with divorce issues must do it in community.

Further, Bay Pointe Community Church extends understanding, openness, healing, hope, wise counsel and restoration to persons in struggling marriages. Our desire is that all people who call Bay Pointe Community Church home—be they married, divorced, remarried or single—experience conviction, repentance, and grace.

## STATEMENT ON MEN AND WOMEN IN MINISTRY

We believe the Bible teaches that men and women were created by God and equally bear His image (Genesis 1:27). God's intention was for them to share oneness and community (Genesis 2:23-24), even as the Godhead experiences oneness within the Trinity. Each had a direct relationship with God, and they shared jointly the responsibilities of rearing children and having dominion over the created order (Genesis 1:26-28). However, human oneness was shattered by the Fall. The struggle for power and the desire to "rule over" another is part of the result of human sin. Genesis 3:16 is a prediction of the effects of the Fall rather than a prescription of God's ideal order.

However, God has acted in Christ to redeem the human race and to offer to all people the opportunity to be part of the New Community, His church. It is God's intention for his children to experience the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son (John 17:11, 20-23). This means that old divisions and hierarchies between genders and races are not to be tolerated in the church where all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

In the formation of the church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on men and women alike, as had been predicted long before the coming of Christ (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:18). In the New Testament, women as well as men exercise prophetic and priestly functions (Acts 2:17-18, 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, 1 Peter 2:9-10). Further, the Spirit bestows gifts on all members of the New Community sovereignty, without giving anyone preferential treatment based on gender (Acts 2:1-21, 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). ***Every believer is to offer his or her gifts in a humble manner for the benefit of the entire church and ultimately the world.*** (1 Peter 4:10). To prevent believers from exercising their spiritual gifts is to quench the work of the Spirit.

In all attempts to understand and put into practice appropriate relationships between genders in the body of Christ, our sole authority is the will of God as expressed in Scripture. A few isolated scriptural texts appear to restrict the full ministry freedom of women. However, the interpretation of those passages must take into account their relation to the broader teaching of Scripture and their specific contexts. We believe that when the Bible is interpreted comprehensively it teaches the full equality of men and women in status, giftedness, and opportunity for ministry.

Therefore, in our attempts to live together as a biblically functioning community, we are committed to the following values:

- To provide opportunity for ministry based on spiritual gifts and character, without regard to gender.
- To pursue the kind of purity and loyalty in relationships between genders that led New Testament writers to describe them in terms of family: brothers and sisters.
- To be intentional where appropriate in overcoming sexist elements of our culture and to offer encouragement to women in areas where their gifts have been traditionally discouraged.
- To teach and model these values to members of our community, to the church, and to the world at large.

For further study and more complete discussion of the key scriptural passages pertaining to this issue, we recommend:

Bilezikian, Gilbert — *Beyond Sex Roles* (Baker)  
Barton, Ruth — *Becoming a Woman of Strength* (Shaw)  
Hull, Gretchen — *Equal to Serve* (Fleming H. Revell)  
Keener, Craig — *Paul, Women, Wives* (Hendrickson)  
Ogden, Greg — *The New Reformation* (Zondervan)  
Spencer, Aida — *Beyond the Curse* (Hendrickson)

## **STATEMENT ON ORDINATION**

### **Approved November 21, 2005**

Ordination at Bay Pointe is the act of church leadership (the elders) setting apart those persons gifted by God for the work of full or part-time vocational ministry. Those candidates who have demonstrated gifts for the ministry to which they have been called, along with a genuine commitment to the apostolic message of the gospel and the mission, vision, and values of Bay Pointe, shall be considered for ordination.

Upon completion of a deliberate process of examination a candidate will be eligible to petition the board of elders for ordination. If a staff member were to come to Bay Pointe having been ordained by another ecclesiastical body, the board of elders reserves the right to waive any or all of the ordination requirements listed in this document.

## **CRITERIA FOR ORDINATION**

- **Strong Christian character**, evidenced by references from people with several years of life-experience with the candidate. See 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5.
- **Proven track record of effective ministry** demonstrating the candidates' giftedness and leadership.
- **Theological soundness.** The candidate must show biblical and theological competence both in terms of cognitive understanding of core doctrines of the faith (outlines in Bay Pointe's Statement of Faith), and the ability to make appropriate application to ministry in our current context (truth alongside wisdom and discernment).
- **Clarity on philosophy of ministry** as evidenced by written responses to Bay Pointe's mission, vision, values, strategies and governance, and the elders position papers, including but not limited to men and women in ministry, human sexuality, divorce and remarriage, the purpose and function of spiritual gifts, church discipline and the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper).
- **An ongoing accountability relationship** with Bay Pointe leadership.
- **A ministry position with responsibilities** that meet the qualifications as set out by IRS (i.e. teaching, celebrating the sacraments, assisting with weddings and funerals, counseling, etc.).

## **THE PROCESS OF ORDINATION**

- **The staff member will approach the lead pastor** seeking permission to begin the ordination process. If the ministry responsibilities warrant proceeding with ordination, the process will begin at a mutually agreed upon time.
- **Completion of required reading, courses and training**
  - ✓ An overview of both the OT and NT (book or audio-course).  
Materials to be approved by lead pastor.
  - ✓ Completion of any core Bay Pointe courses (ex: Getting Grounded, Becoming A Contagious Christian, Network/Finding Your Fit, Good Sense), along with any further training deemed necessary by the lead pastor and/or elders.
  - ✓ Work with the lead pastor or other pastoral staff to ensure adequate training/mentoring has taken place with regard to sacramental functions (communion and baptism) and officiating at public services (weddings, funerals, etc) so that the staff member honors God and represents the work of Christ with excellence in the world.

- **If not previously ordained, a minimum of six months on staff will be required.** The elders reserve the right to modify requirements based on biblical/theological training and experience.
- **Examination by an ordination interview team** made up of representatives from the ordained pastoral staff and the elders of Bay Pointe Community Church.

## **THE ACT OF ORDINATION**

- Upon completion of required work and subject to the approval of the elder board, the candidate will be ordained, qualifying him or her to officiate at weddings and funerals, celebrate the sacraments, and teach within their respective area of ministry.
- Ordination will be granted for one year. Each year in November staff members will be required to petition the elders for ordination for the upcoming year. The purpose is to ensure that all ordained staff members continue to meet the criteria for ordination set up by the board of elders of Bay Pointe, and to ensure that all Internal Revenue Service guidelines are upheld so as to avoid any possibility of scandal that would damage the integrity and witness of Bay Pointe Community Church.

## **STATEMENT ON SABBATICAL LEAVE** **Revised and Approved June 19, 2007**

**PURPOSE:** To encourage and reward long-term faithful service to Bay Pointe Community Church. To promote a time for them to be spiritually nurtured and to reflect on their relationship with God and their own story, in order that they can be renewed, refreshed and revitalized for a life of service to the church.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

- 1) Full-time ordained staff becomes eligible upon completion of six (6) years of service at Bay Pointe. The time between sabbaticals will be at least six (6) years.
- 2) The staff member must have received satisfactory job performance reviews.

**PRINCIPLES:**

- 1) The elder board expects and strongly encourages eligible staff to take advantage of the sabbatical policy.
- 2) The elder board expects eligible staff to be on sabbatical during their seventh, eighth, or ninth year of employment, or prior to the start of their tenth year of employment. For subsequent sabbaticals the same expectation would apply. For example, after completion of the twelfth year of continuous employment the Board of Elders would expect the person to complete their sabbatical prior to the start of their sixteenth year.
- 3) The sabbatical leave will consist of a maximum of three (3) consecutive months (or 90 days) of leave with full pay and benefits. Other expenses will not be paid during sabbatical leave without prior approval from the Board of Elders.
- 4) No more than one staff member will be granted sabbatical leave at a time unless approved by the Board of Elders.
- 5) Sabbatical leave will not be converted to cash upon termination.
- 6) Accrued vacation time may be attached to the sabbatical leave at board discretion.
- 7) In granting a sabbatical leave, the Board of Elders expects the staff member to continue his or her position for twelve (12) months following the return from sabbatical.
- 8) A written and oral report following the sabbatical to the Board of Elders is required.
- 9) Sabbatical expenses not to exceed 5% of annual salary may be considered with advanced approval of the Elder Board. If approved, funds would be in addition to salary and benefits and may be advanced at the beginning of the leave. Upon return from the sabbatical, an expense report with accompanying receipts will be required for all expenses incurred.

#### PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1) Eligible staff members who wish to be considered for a sabbatical leave shall make a written request to the senior pastor no less than four (4) months prior to the beginning of the sabbatical. The exception would be the senior pastor who will make his request directly to the board of elders.

The request must include:

- a. A statement of purpose for the leave and expected outcomes.
- b. An outline of the proposed activity, dates and location.
- c. A statement indicating options the church might consider to cover the responsibilities and duties that the staff member would normally handle, along with the expected cost of temporary replacement personnel, if needed.
- d. Proposed sabbatical expenses shall be submitted for approval and must be itemized and included with the request.

- 2) Consideration of a request for sabbatical leave shall include the following questions:
  - a. Will the staff member's effectiveness in the church be directly enhanced?
  - b. Will the leave help to enhance the staff member's professional status?
  - c. How will the larger ministry of Bay Pointe benefit from this sabbatical?
  - d. What plans will be put in place to ensure that ministries of the church are not impaired?
  
- 3) The senior pastor will make the determination regarding the approval of the sabbatical leave and communicate the decision to the staff member requesting the leave. The exception would be for the senior pastor's sabbatical, which will be determined by the board of elders.

#### STAFF DURING LEAVE:

- 1) The church will cover the cost for temporary replacement personnel for staff members on sabbatical leave, as necessary. Replacement of the staff member will be considered according to the following priorities:
  - a. Non-critical duties will be deferred until the staff member's return.
  - b. Other staff members will fill responsibilities.
  - c. Volunteers may be considered to fill some responsibilities.
  - d. If critical duties cannot be covered by the above, a paid temporary replacement will be considered.
  
- 2) Additional personnel costs, if necessary, will need to be included in the church budget.