

TITUS 1:5-9

APPOINTING ELDERS IN EVERY TOWN

“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”¹

Following establishment of a church, the appointment of elders must surely qualify as one of the most vital tasks facing the church planter. Clearly, this task was a priority for the Apostle Paul since we are told that he, in concert with Barnabas, appointed elders in each church [e.g. **ACTS 14:23**]. Writing in the text before us, the Apostle specifically directed Titus to complete this vital work of appointing elders to serve the various churches established in Crete. Many of the professed saints of God appear confused about the definition of a church; therefore, it should not be surprising that believers appear cavalier about the appointment of elders.

What is a New Testament church? What qualifies a congregation to be identified as a New Testament church? In simple terms, a New Testament church is a congregation that reflects the characteristics of churches described in the New Testament. By that criterion, we must note that many of those churches were obviously dysfunctional and severely flawed; and so are we. We do not wish to cast the churches of that era in mythical proportions; the assemblies were composed of sinners just as the churches of this day are populated with sinners.

A fuller explanation would identify a New Testament church as an assembly of individuals who have believed the Good News that Jesus is the Son of God. Believing that He is God, they are convinced that He was crucified because of their sin and that He was raised from the dead. Openly confessing faith in Jesus as Christ, the twice-born individuals will have been baptised—immersed in water, picturing their confidence in His death, burial and resurrection. United to the Risen Saviour through faith, these redeemed and obedient believers regularly and voluntarily meet to worship Him as the Son of God. Through their mutual worship, they build one another in this holy Faith, advance the cause of Christ through winning others to the Faith and incorporating them into the fellowship of the assembly. Gathered in assembly, the believers practise a congregational polity which calls each individual to submit to the teaching of the Word of God, seeking the Master’s appointment of those whom He wills to lead them in the Word. Those appointed to leadership within a congregation bear the title either of deacons or of elders.

Those identified as deacons bear responsibility for administering the benevolent ministries of the congregation and for administrative care for the properties of the church. Those who are appointed to serve as elders are charged to oversee the work of God, providing spiritual leadership for the members and assuming the role of watchmen over the flock. Thus, it is vital that those appointed to these positions meet the biblical standard for such appointment and that the appointment process be conducted according to biblical precepts.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The message for this day will seek to set forth clearly the conditions for appointment to eldership and to discover the requirements for such appointment. In order to accomplish this essential task, I invite careful attention to the first chapter of Paul's letter to Titus. In particular, I ask that you pay special attention to the sixth through the ninth verses of that letter. There, the Apostle has succinctly stated the necessary character traits required of those who shall receive appointment as elders and reference to the process for that same appointment.

▲ PLURALITY OF ELDERS SUPERINTENDED THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES. Studying the New Testament, it is apparent that oversight of the churches was entrusted to a plurality of elders. With the possible exception of the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia as recorded in the Apocalypse,² the concept of a single Pastor or a Senior Pastor for a particular congregation is unknown. Save for the aged Apostle of Love, there is not found a single individual within a congregation bearing the designation of "the elder." It is true that Peter identifies himself as "a fellow elder" when he appeals to the elders to whom he is writing [1 PETER 5:1]. As noted, John refers to himself as "the elder" [2 JOHN 1; 3 JOHN 1]; but it is abundantly clear that he is not speaking of himself as "the elder" of a church. The concept of a senior pastor, even the concept of a solo pastor conducting an extended ministry, seems foreign to the New Testament.

What we do find in the pages of the New Testament are elders—a plurality of mature men appointed by God to oversee the labours of the churches. Consider the examples provided in the New Testament. James exhorts the sick to "call for the elders of the church" so that they might "pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" [JAMES 5:14]. James is possibly the oldest letter to have been included in the canon of Scripture. Because this is so, it gives us a snapshot of the early attitudes among the churches before doctrine had been codified. It is apparent that the necessity for elders was recognised very early within the Lord's Vineyard.

Writing Timothy in the preliminary pastoral letter, Paul speaks of the conduct of a local congregation. There, he states that "the elders who rule well" are to be "considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching" [1 TIMOTHY 5:17]. Paul also reminds Timothy to exercise the gift received through prophecy "when the council of elders laid their hands" on him [1 TIMOTHY 4:14]. What was nascent for James is solidified for Paul.

As Paul travelled toward Jerusalem at the conclusion of his final missionary journey, he stopped at Miletus; from there he sent to Ephesus requesting that "the elders" of the congregation come to him [see ACTS 20:17]. The decision of the Jerusalem council was pronounced, not by the Apostles alone, but by "the apostles and elders" of the congregation in Jerusalem [ACTS 16:4]. At the conclusion of the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church that they had established [ACTS 14:23]. The first great relief effort mounted by the churches was dispatched "to the elders" of the various churches [ACTS 11:27-30].

Admittedly, this is but a cursory examination of the issue of New Testament treatment of the eldership, but it does provide a strong caution against the common practise of a church "hiring" a pastor or against the practise of a church electing members to a body which oversees the labours of the "pastor," or even against the thought that church can content itself indefinitely with one pastor. In our text, Titus is reminded that he had been left in Crete specifically to "appoint elders in every town." I suggest it is significant that Titus is not enjoined to appoint an elder in each town, but that rather he is charged with appointing "elders (plural) in every town."

² It is possible that Christ's opening words, e.g., "To the angel of the church in Ephesus..." [REVELATION 2:1], refer to a Pastor. It holds out the possibility of one who is "first among equals." See also REVELATION 2:8; 2:12; 2:18; 3:1; 3:7; 3:14 for the other instances of this particular address to each of the churches.

Another issue related to the concept of the New Testament model of a plurality of elders is the multiple terms that are employed for the office. This was broached in a previous sermon.³ Elder, pastor and overseer (or bishop) is used interchangeably in the Bible. That the three terms (elder, pastor and overseer) are synonymous becomes evident as we read the Scriptures.

Consider the words of Peter to demonstrate this truth. “I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” [1 PETER 5:1-5].

Two of the terms Peter used are in the verb form; but all three terms occur in this passage describing the labours of an elder. Peter addresses the elders; generically, the word “elder” [*presbúteros*] refers to a fully mature man. Such a mature individual merits respect; and in describing a leader of the church, the word becomes a term of respect for the office of an elder.

Those who are elders are encouraged to “shepherd the flock of God.” Shepherd translates the Greek verb *poimainō*. The nominal form of the word is *poimāne*, which is rendered “pastor” or “shepherd.” The word describes the spiritual ministries of the leader of the church. As shepherd of the flock, he is charged with the responsibility of feeding, guiding and protecting the flock of God.

Those who shepherd the flock of God are to “exercise oversight” [*episkopéō*], the verb form of *epískopos*; the noun, in older translations of the Bible, was often translated “bishop.” The emphasis is upon the administrative responsibilities of the chief officers of the church. Whenever you see the term “overseer,” you should realise that though it indicates strong leadership, the term neither supports nor implies dictatorship. The three terms—elder, pastor, overseer—differ only in emphasis while referring to the same office. Elders are to accept their responsibilities willingly, being examples to the flock of God, not accepting their position out of desire for inordinate gain or through personal ambition.

As noted in a previous message, ACTS 20:17, 28 is another passage employing all three terms. From Miletus, Paul “sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.” When the elders assembled, the Apostle reviewed the ministry he conducted among them; then he solemnly charged them to fulfil the responsibility of elders in these stern words: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”

Again, note that Paul applied the three terms to the same men. These terms do not speak of levels of authority—they are used to indicate diversity of function. The elders were made “overseers” by the Holy Spirit and they were charged “to care for the church of God.” In this instance, the word which is translated “to care for” comes from the same Greek verb which Peter employed—*poimainō*. The New American Standard Bible translates the word somewhat literally, teaching that the responsibility of elders is “to shepherd the church of God.”⁴

³ Michael Stark, “Desiring a Noble Task,” sermon preached August 11, 2013, <http://newbeginningsbaptist.ca/clientimages/42652/sermonarchive/1%20timothy%203.01%20desiring%20a%20noble%20task.pdf>, accessed 17 August 2013

⁴ **New American Standard Bible**, The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977; see also, **New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update** (The Lockman Foundation, LaHabra CA 1995).

Again, note that God—not man—makes the elders overseers. As overseers appointed by God, these gifted men are charged with the task of shepherding the flock of God. What is vital for the sake of our own future ministries is to note carefully that elders are overseers, and that overseers are elders. The elders/overseers are responsible before God to pastor God's flock. Do not ignore the truth that the terms—elder, pastor and overseer—refer to the diversity of tasks and responsibilities which accompany the position.

In the text before us today, Titus is charged with the responsibility of appointing elders in the various towns of Crete; and by implication, those elders are deemed to be overseers. Note the almost casual reference to overseers in our text when the subject is appointment of elders. "An overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach" [TITUS 1:7]. In this fashion, Paul makes the point that overseers and elders are the same men. There is not a hierarchy; this is simplicity of design in which the spiritual leaders are identified by several names.

To bring the point into vivid focus, consider one final verse of Scripture on this matter. The writer of the Letter to Hebrew Christians provides this admonition as he closes the missive. "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you" [HEBREWS 13:17]. Here, the writer refers to the overseers/elders/pastors as "your leaders." He says they are keeping watch over the souls of the members of the flock. They are recognised, therefore, as the leaders of the congregation, charged with giving an accounting for their service to the One who appoints to that service.

ELDERS ARE APPOINTED, NOT ELECTED. In the various texts to which I have already referred, it is evident that God makes a man an elder (or an overseer, if you prefer). An individual does not go to school to learn to be an elder. A man need not be a graduate of seminary in order to be an elder. Neither does a man require approval by a particular denomination in order to be an elder. Elders are appointed by God to be received by the churches to which they are appointed.

In the account of Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders when they met at Miletus, did you note that it was God who appointed them overseers of the church? Perhaps this occurred following a ceremony, but the wording would lead us to believe that God was responsible for the appointment, having equipped these men for this particular task. I suggest to you that the manner in which God appoints is through spiritual development of individuals. Those individuals exhibiting spiritual maturity, meeting the biblical standard which we shall shortly consider, have received God's attention—He has been preparing them for appointment.

For a sampling of rendering of this verse from a number of recent Bibles translations, see the following: **The NET Bible First Edition** (Biblical Studies Press 2006)—"Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son."; **The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version** (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN 2009)—"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood."; **International Standard Version** (ISV Foundation, Yorba Linda, CA 2011)—"Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to be shepherds of God's church, which he acquired with his own blood."; **The Revised English Bible** (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996)—"Keep guard over yourselves and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord, which he won for himself by his own blood."; **The New English Bible** (Oxford University Press, New York 1970)—"Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord, which he won for himself by his own blood."; **The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version** (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville 1989)—"Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son."

This begs the question of the appointment process itself. How does appointment play out in the normal course of events? I note that in the whole of the New Testament, whenever elders are sought out, the seeking and appointment is always by other elders and never by the churches. The principle may be stated in this manner: *Sheep do not elect a shepherd!* Search ever so diligently through the pages of the New Testament and you find no individual receiving “a call” from a church. God appoints; and His churches receive. What I mean is this—it is through either apostolic appointment—or after the apostles had passed from the scene—it was through appointment by elders that men were elevated to the office of elders.

In the account of the first missionary tour, I invite your focus on the final acts of the missionaries among the churches recently established. We read that Paul and Barnabas, having completed the advance into areas that had not previously heard the message of life, returned so that they could visit the nascent congregations in the various cities where they had preached the Word. Were the missionaries only encouraging these new Christians? No, the text tells us that they were equipping them for future service through appointing elders. Here is Doctor Luke’s description: “When they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed” [ACTS 14:23].

Though the Jewish congregations had elders [cf. ACTS 15:2, 22], this is the first mention of elders in the Gentile churches. It is reasonable to assume that the Jewish assemblies served as models for the Gentiles churches. What is important for us to note at this point is that the elders were appointed and not elected. I understand that those among us reading the Authorised Version (King James Version) of the Bible will read that the apostles “ordained” elders. English is a dynamic language—meanings change quite rapidly and frequently. We do not understand English as it was spoken in previous generations; this leads us to err in if we are not careful.

According to the Authorised Version, it was God who “ordained the moon and the stars” [PSALM 8:3 KJV]; however, no contemporary translation uses this term, choosing rather to state that God either set them in place or appointed them. Although we were taught that “out of the mouth of babes and sucklings” God has “ordained strength” [PSALM 8:2 KJV], modern English speakers understand that he has “established strength.” The word “ordain” and the assorted cognates of the word, occur forty times in either the Authorised Version or in the King James Version (1900) of the Bible. In each instance, the term simply means that God appointed.

Whatever else may be apparent, there is no mandate for what has commonly come to be referred to as ordination in this passage. In fact, the commonly accepted concept of ordination is foreign to the New Testament; however, that subject must wait until a future study of the Word. What is important for our purpose at this time is that the Apostles appointed elders, but they did not perform a formal ceremony in order to ordain elders.

Some people have contended that the verb which Doctor Luke used in this passage means to elect by a show of hands. That is a possible meaning of the word; but if you wish to use this argument, then you must note that the electing was not done by the churches, but rather was conducted by the apostles. Indeed, the churches “appointed” men to travel with the apostles as they delivered the gifts to the Jerusalem saints [2 CORINTHIANS 8:19], but the subject of the verb in this instance is the apostles. The apostles appointed or installed.

Note the grammar used in this passage. “When they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” The pronoun, “they,” refers to the apostles who did the appointing. They appointed elders “for them,” that is the elders were not appointed *by* but they were appointed *for* the churches.

As an elder, Timothy was instructed concerning conduct of the church, and more particularly, he was instructed concerning the qualifications for eldership. He was cautioned to avoid being “hasty in the laying on of hands” [1 TIMOTHY 5:22]. Those men considered for appointed as elders are to be observed to ensure that they meet the qualifications of the office. Deacons and elders must demonstrate integrity and devotion to ministry before appointment; building confidence for those appointing and in those receiving appointment requires time. There is to be no heated rush to have elders simply because elders are needed. Better to struggle with minimal oversight than to rue hasty appointment of unqualified individuals to holy office.

Look once again to the text for today’s message. Paul reminds Titus that he was to “appoint elders in every town” [*katastēsās katâ pólin presbutérous*]. The word translated “appoint” [from the Greek verb *kathístāmi*] is a rather common verb which means “to put in charge” or “to authorise.”⁵ In secular usage, the verb spoke of the appointment of a judge or a governor. More particularly, Kittel states that the verb implies “to set in an elevated position or an office.”⁶ It is instructive for us to note that R. J. Knowling states that “the verb implies at all events an exercise of authority.”⁷

One of the great Anglican scholars noted for his abilities in translating the Greek was F.J.A. Hort, who wrote concerning the Apostle’s words to Titus, “Thus Titus was in this respect to do what Paul and Barnabas had done in the cities of Southern Asia Minor on their return from the first missionary journey.”⁸ What should be apparent from these studies is that elders are not elected, but they are rather appointed.

Perhaps a catchy phrase will prove helpful in remembering this truth. ***Elders appoint elders; churches accept the appointment of elders.*** In saying this, I am not implying that elders are foisted on the churches; rather, I am simply stating that the process of seeking out and appointing elders is done through the elders themselves. However, the churches over whom God appoints elders are responsible to either accept or reject the elders God appoints. If God has raised up elders as leaders, it should be apparent to all who will give voice to receiving the ones whom God appoints.

ELDERS MUST MEET A BIBLICAL STANDARD BEFORE APPOINTMENT. In the modern world of religion, *credentials* and *connections* have become essential for ordination and/or election to eldership. In the New Testament, however, *character and calling* are of paramount importance for divine appointment. In other words, where one went to school or by whom one may be known is of no particular value in discovering how God has worked in the individual’s life. What *is* important is whether the individual evidences divine appointment to the position and that the evidence of that appointment, demonstrated through godly character, is apparent to all who will receive the individual as an elder charged to oversee the work of God.

Consider the passages which speak of the qualifications for appointment to eldership. The pertinent passages are **TITUS 1:5-9**, **1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7** and **1 PETER 5:1-5**. Read these passages with me in the order given.

⁵ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, **A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature** (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL 1957) 391

⁶ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 3** (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1964) 444

⁷ R. J. Knowling, **Acts of the Apostles**, in W. Robertson Nicoll, **The Expositor’s Greek Testament**, five volumes (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1900-10) 169

⁸ F.J.A. Hort, **The Christian Ecclesia** (London, Macmillan, 1897) 176

Here is Paul's view of eldership as presented to Titus and to Timothy. "I left you in Crete ... so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" [TITUS 1:5-9].

"If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil" [1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7].

Then, here is Peter's take on eldership. "I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" [1 PETER 5:1-5].

Character counts! Overarching every other criterion vital to determining spiritual maturity is the need to be "above reproach." The individual considered for appointment to eldership must be of such character that neither in his private life nor in his public life, does he bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. The opinion of outsiders is important in this instance, since they are watching and because they witness the character of those leading the churches.

I do not wish at this time to go into detail concerning the implications of this rather long list of character traits, except to note that the elders of a congregation must be men of character. The sole criterion unrelated to character is the ability to teach which is mandated of those who would be elders. Teaching becomes vital since it will be through the act of teaching that an elder both nourishes the flock, refreshes the flock and protects the flock against error.

One issue that is frequently distorted among the churches is adoption of the idea that elders are appointed to serve on a board—however, *elders are to shepherd the flock*. Each elder must be a capable pastor. There is no such creature as a "board elder" to be found in Scripture. Elders are servants of Christ, labouring collegially among the flock of God to provide pastoral oversight as they shepherd the flock of God.

You understand, of course, why the appointment of elders must not be hurried—verifying character takes time. Verifying teaching abilities requires time for assessment. The appointment process must not be reduced to a popularity contest; neither must the appointment be decided by credentials or even by pressure from outside the congregation. The appointment process requires careful consideration, constantly bathed in prayer as the elders seek the mind of God. If the appointing elders have invested time in the presence of God, the elders whom God has raised up will be apparent to the congregation.

This is what I find especially exciting: when a church is functioning as God intended—elders providing oversight and deacons conducting the benevolent ministries of the church—the cause of Christ is advanced. In such a church, the people of God are nourished and the community of outsiders observing the church will be confronted with the call to faith in the Risen Son of God. The assembly will discover intensified harmony and strength as they receive the ministries which God intended for His holy people. Who among us resents the salvation of the lost and the advance of God's Kingdom? Indeed, we who are redeemed rejoice in the salvation of sinners and in the unity of the Spirit among us.

The appointment of elders is not an end in itself, but it is rather an ongoing requirement for the continued health and growth of the church. When elders have been appointed, they are responsible immediately to begin the process of preparing yet other men for future appointment as elders. This permits each member of the Body to focus on that ministry which the Spirit of God has entrusted to him or her, conducting that needed ministry so that the entire Body is made strong and therefore built up in the Faith.

The message today serves as a call for each member of the Body to begin to pray, earnestly asking that God will provide elders for us so that the cause of Christ may be advanced through us and so that we may prosper as a congregation. The message serves as a call for the people of God to seek the unity of the Faith, building one another and investing life and service in the Body so that the Name of the Lord our God will be magnified. It is a call for the people of God in sincerity to seek the blessing of God on this elder as he always endeavours to know the will of God and that he will courageously seek to do that divine will.

To those yet on the fringes of this great work, is it not time that you should unite with us? We call those who are Christians to come join us in this great work. The way in which we receive members is through confession of faith in Christ as Lord of life and obedience to Him in baptism following salvation. Why should you delay? If you are willing to confess Him as Lord, come identify with Him in the act of baptism as He commands. If you have never been baptised, come today requesting this identifying act commanded by the Risen Son of God. The congregation stands ready to receive you and we will assuredly rejoice with you in your commitment.

If you are saved and have been baptised since you believed, you were no doubt a member of another congregation. Come, asking that we receive you on the transfer of your church letter. We will count it our joy to care for this matter and we will quickly affect the transfer. If the church which you previously attended is no longer able to provide a letter of church membership, we will receive you on a statement of Christian experience. If you tell us that you have believed in the Risen Christ as Lord and Saviour, having been baptised upon that confession of faith, we will receive you as a fellow member on your statement of Christian experience.

We invite you who are members of this church to commit yourself to pray for this growing process, asking that God be glorified through providing that which we may lack. We invite all who are believers in the Risen Master to commit themselves to fulfil the ministry which He has entrusted to you. We invite all who will join us in this great work to come now while we stand and while we sing. May God Himself walk with you as you come. Amen.