

P I L L A R C H U R C H ' S

GROUP LIFE

Purpose

Group Life is the membership course for Pillar Church. The course is designed to inform any perspective member about the major issues related to membership and is presented by church leaders in three, one-hour sessions. Group Life is a prerequisite for membership at Pillar Church. Our goal is that at the conclusion of this course you have a clear understanding of the direction and structure of our church as well as knowledge of the benefits and expectations of membership.

© 2008 Pillar Church, SBC
Mail: P.O. Box 622 Dumfries VA 22026
Phone: 703.508.9985
Web: www.pillarchurchsbc.com
Fax: 540-720-9070

P I L L A R C H U R C H ' S

GROUP LIFE

Table of Contents

Week One:

1. What does it mean to be a Christian?
2. What is membership and why is it important?
3. How is Pillar governed?
4. What is the history of Pillar?

Week Two:

5. What is Pillar's purpose and strategy?
6. What does Pillar's future look like?
7. What affiliations and partnerships does Pillar have?
8. What are the essential beliefs at Pillar?

Week Three:

9. What are Life Groups?
10. How can I use my gifts to serve Christ at Pillar?
11. What will you expect of me if I become a member?
12. Can I tell you a little about myself?

What does it mean to be a Christian?

“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” – Romans 10:9-10

There are a lot of misconceptions about what it means to be a Christian. Many people quickly identify themselves as Christians because of where they were born, who their parents are or what church they attend. The Bible tells us clearly what it means to be a Christian. Even if you have considered yourself a Christian for a long time, I challenge you to compare your definition of “Christian” to the one that is presented in the Bible.

Fact: The word Christian means, “Little Christ”. The early church first used the term because they were seeking to be like Christ.

Becoming a Christian is more than...

1. Being born in a _____ .
2. Attending a _____ .
3. Being a _____ and _____ .
4. Being _____ into the Christian faith.
5. Knowing the _____ of Jesus Christ.

Becoming a Christian is...

1. Believing that Jesus is the only _____ and _____ of all who put their trust in Him. *(John 14:6; Matthew 16:15,16; Acts 4:12; John 3:16,17)*
2. Confessing my _____ . *(Romans 10:9)*
3. Admitting my complete _____ on my own and to turn away from my self righteousness and sin to receive Christ as my Savior. *(Romans 3:23; 6:23; Acts 2:38,39; Ephesians 2-8 9)*
4. To be _____ by the regenerating and renewing work of God's Spirit. *(Titus 3:5-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17)*
5. To be made a new _____ and heir of eternal life. *(John 1:12; 3:36)*
6. To live a life of _____ that is filled with the evidence of His Spirit's power and presence. *(1 John 2:4-6; Galatians 5:22-24)*

Each of us fall into one of the two categories below:

- We have accepted the cultural definition of Christianity.
- We have believed the testimony about Jesus in the Bible and repented of our sins.

Regenerative church membership is a distinctive at Pillar Church. This means that if you wish to be a member at Pillar Church you have given testimony to the fact that, through faith in Jesus Christ, you have believed the gospel and repented of your sins.

Have you ever become a Christian?

___ No, I have had a misunderstanding about what it means to be a Christian.

If this is you:

- You should begin to pray that God would cause you to believe the good news about Jesus.
- You should begin reading your Bible and seeking council from Christians whom you respect.
- You should get involved in a Life Group.

___ Yes, I am a Christian!

If this is you:

- Please share the story of how and when you became a Christian in the space provided below.

What was your life like before you became a Christian?

What is membership and why is it important?

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” - Ephesians 2:19-22

You may like to think of the church as a business, a non-profit organization or a social club, but according to the Bible the church is like a **family** (1 Tim 3:15), a **body** (1 Corinthians 12) and a **bride** (Ephesians 5:22-23).

- If the church is a family, a Christian without a church is a spiritual orphan.
- If the church is a body, a Christian without a church is like a hand without an arm.
- If the church is a bride, can a Christian love Jesus and hate his wife?

You may have heard or said one of these things as an excuse for not being involved in a local church:

- I'm fine with Jesus; it's His followers I don't like.
- I can worship God just as well at home as I can at church.
- The church is full of hypocrites.
- _____.
- _____.

Expectations for membership at Pillar Church will be discussed in the last session but below are a few of the reasons that every Christian should become a part of a local church.

1. Joining a church _____ . (Hebrews 10:23-25)
2. Joining a church encourages _____ . (1 Peter 4:10-11)
3. Joining a church provides _____ . (Matthew 18:15-20, Proverbs 27:17)
4. Joining a church provides _____ . (Acts 2:42-47)
5. Joining a church helps the _____ . (1 Thess. 1:2-4,8)

Anyone can be a member who...

1. Is personally trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. Has been baptized according to the New Testament pattern of baptism by immersion as a personal witness of their faith in Christ.
3. Is willing to commit themselves to serve Jesus Christ through the ministry and vision of Pillar Church.

You can become a member by...

1. Professing Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Attending Pillar Church's Group Life membership class.
3. Affirming the church constitution.
4. Affirming the church membership covenant on page 26.

Still Not Convinced? See Appendix A page 28 for more rationale.
Excerpt from "Baptism & Church Membership" By Dr. John Piper

How is Pillar Church Governed?

“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.” – 1 Peter 5:2-3

We believe that Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). He is the source of all that the Church is and does. His Word, the Bible, is our standard for every decision. Pillar Church’s existence is for His pleasure and purpose alone.

Pillar Church believes that all Christians are ministers and priests of God (1 Peter 2:5 10), that all Christians have received spiritual gifts from God (Romans 12:3 6), and that all Christians have a special place of service in the church body (1 Corinthians 12). Pillar Church recognizes that God’s plan for church leadership is not specified in the pages of the Bible. Therefore, Pillar Church’s structure follows the example modeled by the early Christian church as recorded in the New Testament. Where Scripture is silent we seek through prayer and biblical principles to mold the structure to a form most useful for His work.

There are Two Offices at Pillar Church:

I. The _____ has four responsibilities

1. To teach sound _____. (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Peter 5:2*)
2. To provide overall _____. (*1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2*)
3. To administer redemptive _____. (*Matthew 18:16-20; Galatians 6:1-2*)
4. To model lives of _____. (*1 Timothy 5:19-21; 1 Peter 5:3; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6*)

Since the office of an Elder is a biblical one, certain qualifications of spiritual maturity must be met (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The Bible indicates that this office should only be held by men. These men will lead the church and be its primary teachers and shepherds. (See Appendix D - Male Eldership on page 40)

Qualifications for Elders:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Above reproach | 14. Hold firm to the Word |
| 2. The husband of one wife | 15. Able to give sound instruction |
| 3. Believing children | 16. Able to refute bad instruction |
| 4. Sober-minded | 17. Able to teach |
| 5. Not arrogant | 18. Not a drunkard |
| 6. Not quick-tempered | 19. Not violent but gentle |
| 7. Self-controlled | 20. Not quarrelsome |
| 8. Respectable | 21. Not a lover of money |
| 9. Hospitable | 22. Not greedy |
| 10. Lover of good | 23. Good manager of household |
| 11. Upright | 24. Keep children submissive |
| 12. Holy | 25. Not a new convert |
| 13. Disciplined | 26. Well thought of by outsiders |

2. The _____ has one responsibility.

To serve the church (Acts 6:1-7)

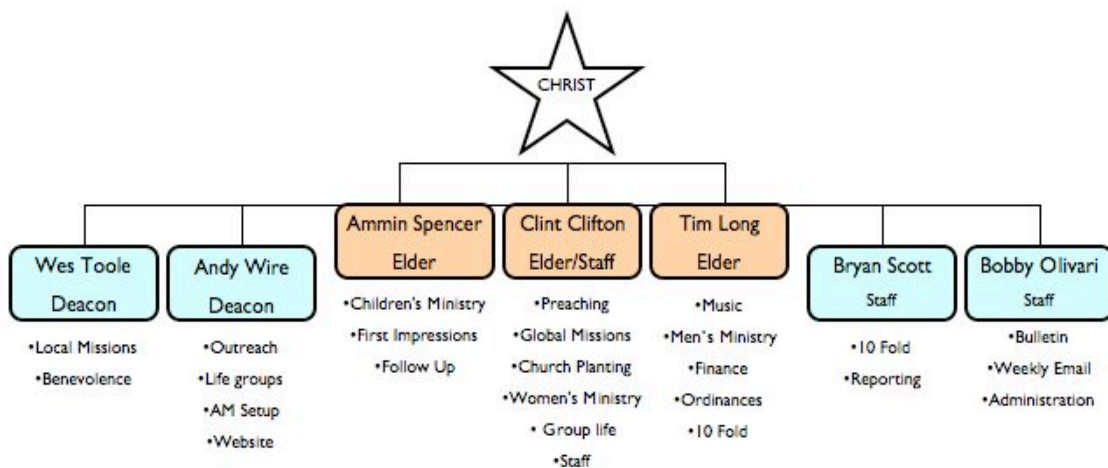
Since the office of Deacon is also a Biblical one, we look again to the scripture for the qualifications of the person to fill this office. 1 Timothy 3:8-13 gives the qualifications for those who are to serve as deacons. Since six of the Deacons qualifications have to do with the wife and family, it is Pillar Church's position that the office of Deacon is best fulfilled by a married couple.

Qualifications for Deacons:

1. Dignified
2. Not double-tongued
3. Not addicted to wine
4. Not greedy
5. Hold to faith with a clear conscience.
6. Blameless
7. Dignified wives
8. Wives not slanderous
9. Wives sober minded
10. Wives faithful
11. Husband of one wife
12. Managing house and children well

Staff

Salaried staff is called at Pillar Church's discretion according to ministry needs. Staff members are hired to accomplish specific tasks related to the ministry. Pastoral staff members must meet all of the qualifications of an elder. New staff members can apply for membership and be nominated for a church office just as can any other member.



Elders

Clint Clifton

Clint@pillarchurchsbc.com
703-508-9985

Ammin Spencer

Spencer_sc@yahoo.com
703-221-3641

Tim Long

timothylong@yahoo.com
Cell- 850-276-6503
Home- 703-670-253

Deacons

Wes Toole

westoole@hotmail.com

Andy Wire

Adwire_98@yahoo.com

Staff

Clint Clifton

Clint@pillarchurchsbc.com
Pastor

Bryan Scott

Bryan@pillarchurchsbc.com
Associate Pastor

Bobby Oliveri

Questdotcom@hotmail.com
Ministry Assistant

About our Elders:

Ammin Spencer is in the Marines and is currently assigned to the Pentagon. Ammin lives in Southbridge with his wife, Sarah, and their two sons, Josiah and Levi. Ammin was raised as the son of a Pastor became a Christian at the age of eight. The Spencer family has been a part of Pillar Church since Spring 2006. Ammin and Sarah currently host one of Pillar's Life Group Bible studies in their home on Thursday evenings and encourage you to join them.

Tim Long is an annalist with Northrop Grumman working in Tyson's Corner. Tim lives in Montclair with his wife, Amanda and their son Isaac. The longs have been a part of Pillar Church since early 2005. Tim and Amanda have led various ministries and Life Groups since that time but currently Tim oversees Ten Fold, Finances, Men's Ministry and ordinances while Amanda leads Sunday morning musical worship.

Clint Clifton lives in Southbridge with his wife, Jennifer, and his three children Noah, Ruthe and Isaiah. Clint became a Christian when he was sixteen years old. Clint immediately immersed himself in church work serving and starting churches in Florida, Alabama and Virginia before coming to Dumfries. Clint was ordained into ministry in March of 1999, received a BA in church music from the Baptist College of Florida in the winter of 2001 and a MA in Religion from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in the spring of 2004. In addition to his work at Pillar Church Clint is a Catalytic Church Planter with the North American Mission Board where he trains and recruits new church planters.

What is the History of Pillar?

In the early spring of 2002 Clint Clifton was a seminary student who had recently joined the pastoral staff of Stafford Baptist to direct music ministries. Before moving to Stafford the Clifton family visited Dumfries for the first time. During their visit God began speak to them about planting a new church in Virginia's oldest town. "When I turned off of Rt. 1 into the Southbridge community I noticed, to my left, a sea of rooftops that seemed to extend for miles. I drove through the community and saw thousands of homes and no churches! After several years of research and prayer my family began to believe that God was inviting us to plant a church in this community."

- In January of 2004 Pastor Bill Jessup and the leadership Stafford Baptist agreed to send Pastor Clint to Dumfries to plant a new church.
- The following month Pastor Clint presented the idea to the congregation at Stafford Baptist. He asked congregants to pray about making a commitment to join the core team.
- In May of 2004, 19 people gathered for the first meeting. Following this meeting the group was formed into a Sunday school class.
- In July of 2004, Pastor Naethan Hendrix moved to Stafford from Geneva, Alabama, to assist Pastor Clint in the planting of the new church.
- The core team recognized two primary purposes for the church: 1) worship 2) evangelism, The team determined that these two purposes would be the "pillars" of this baby church. Because the church had no name core team members began referring to the group as "Pillar Church".
- In October of 2004 Pillar Church held it's first public worship service at Locust Shade Park. Weekly meetings continued at the park for a few weeks until cold weather forced the group to move to the Holiday Inn just north of Dumfries on Hwy 234.
- In January of 2005 the Pillar Church moved it's current location at Swans Creek Elementary School in Southbridge.
- In February of 2005 The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia contributed more than \$40,000 dollars to Pillar Church for the purchase of church equipment from Portable Church Industries.
- On Easter Sunday, March 27th 2005 Pillar Church held its first public Worship service at Swans Creek Elementary School. 109 people were in attendance that morning including many of the leaders at Stafford Baptist. In the following months weekly attendance averaged around 35.
- In August of 2005 Pillar Church participated in its first international mission project by sending a team of three to Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- In Late 2005 Pastors Clint & Naethan and began "The Church at Quantico" on Sunday evenings in the Quantico Community Center.
- In the summer of 2006 Pastor Clint announced his intentions to join with Stafford Baptist and the Church at Quantico to plant a new church in Iceland. The project required the Pastor Clint and his family to move to Iceland for 4 months beginning in September of 2006. After prayerful consideration the church decided to move forward with the Iceland Project. During Pastor Clint's stay in Iceland, Colby Garman led the ministry at Pillar Church.

- In the summer of 2007 Jamie and Jessica Limato began a mentoring relationship with Pastor Clint. Jamie learned church planting, became a part of Pillar Church and assisted with children's ministry. In early 2008 Jamie was commissioned out by Pillar Church to begin a new church in Norfolk, VA.
- Upon Pastor Clint's return from Iceland, Pillar Church began the process of implementing church government. The Biblical Eldership model was chosen and in October of 2007 church leaders were elected.
- In November of 2007 church leadership announced plans to plant a new church in the Locust Grove area near the intersection of Hwy 3 and Hwy 20, west of Fredericksburg. Jonathan Davis, one of Pillar Church's original elders, would lead the new church. Jonathan accepted God's call to plant a church in the community where he lives. Upon investigating the spiritual condition of the community, Jonathan identified several core families and began meetings in late 2007.
- On March 30th, 2008 pillar Church's 3rd anniversary we constituted as a church. The constitution was signed by church elders: Clint Clifton, Jonathan Davis, Ammin Spencer & Tim Long.
- On March 4th of 2008 Bryan Scott held the first TENFOLD teen meeting at the home of Alex & Kate Chatman with two teens in attendance.
- August 4-15, 2008 Pillar Church lead a team of twelve on a short-term mission trip to Indonesia. Upon their return the Elders at Pillar Church agreed to focus their foreign mission efforts to the Loloan People of Bali, Indonesia.
- On September 1st 2008 the Pillar Church Elders hired Bryan Scott as the full time associate pastor focusing on Students.

Homework:

- Write your testimony on page 5-6.
- Read Pillar Church History (Chapter 4)
- Write down any questions that you have for the next session.

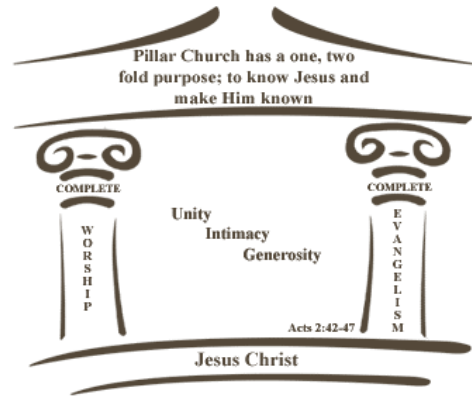
What is the purpose of Pillar Church?

“Church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.” – 1 Timothy 3:15

Our name: Pillar Church, SBC

We are called Pillar Church for **two** reasons.

1. 1 Timothy 3:15 describes the church as the “pillar of truth” The desire has always been to uphold the truth of the Gospel to those who live in our community.
2. We have two pillars. That is, we have two things that are absolutely essential to our purpose.
 - a. Knowing Jesus- _____
 - b. Making Him Known – _____



The SBC in our name identifies us as a church shares common doctrine and cooperates in missions with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Our Purpose: “Pillar Church exists to Know Jesus and Make Him Known.”

We believe that the church has two primary purposes; **Worship and Evangelism**

- Worship simply defined is to Know Jesus.
- Evangelism simply defined is to Make Jesus Known.

You will find other purposes for the church in the Bible such as:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| • Prayer | • Fellowship |
| • Music/Singing | • Community |
| • Proclamation | • Mercy & Social Concern |
| • Discipleship | |

We believe that these purposes are easily categorized under two main headings:

Knowing Jesus

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| • Prayer | • Discipleship |
| • Music/Singing | • Community |
| • Proclamation (to the church) | • Fellowship |

Making Him Known

- Mercy & Social Concern
- Proclamation (to the world)
- Discipleship

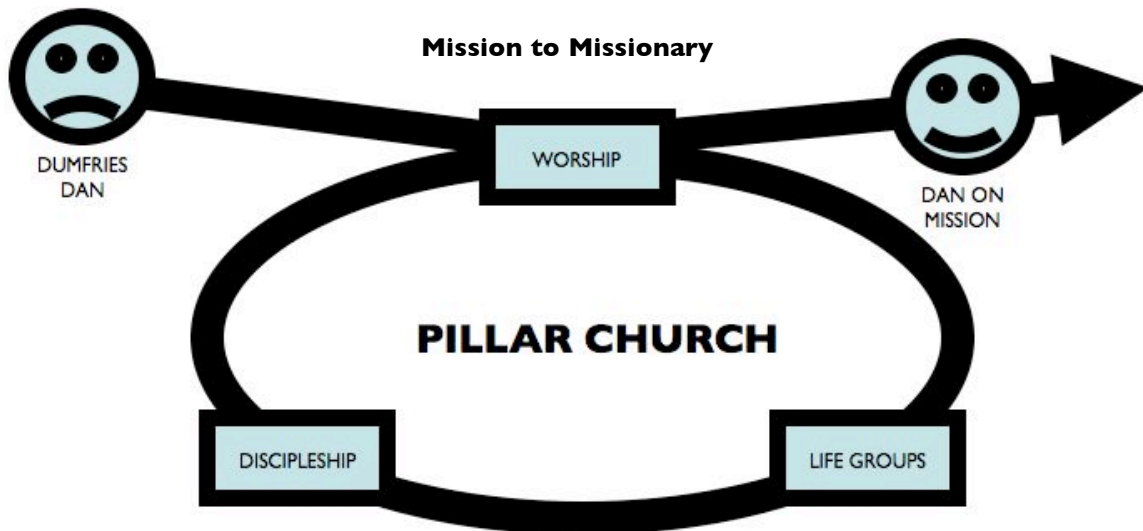
“In the same way, the church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose. It says in the Bible that the whole universe was made for Christ and that everything is to be gathered together in Him.” - **C.S. Lewis**, *Mere Christianity*

Our Core Values: We have tried in every way possible to structure our church after the a brief description of the early church in Acts 2:42-47. There are three characteristics mentioned in that passages that we work to mimic. We believe these characteristics should mark our church. These are they things we want people to think of us when they think of us.

- **Unity-** What we do, ____ _ ____.
- **Intimacy-** Closer to each other means ____ _ ____.
- **Generosity-** Giving our best to God because ____ _ ____.

Our Strategy: Local

Ok... so we want to Know Jesus and Make Him known.... But how do we plan to do that? In this section you will find some of the strategies for accomplishing our purpose.



Generally speaking those who attend Pillar Church will only live here for only a few years. In the time that God entrusts you to us we have the goal of seeing you journey from your current spiritual condition to a point where you are serving God by brining the teachings of Christ to someone else. We call this journey “mission to missionary.”

Our Strategy: Multiplication (Churches Planting Churches)

We are a church planting church. That means that a tremendous amount of our efforts and resources go into the establishment of new churches and the rising up of pastors and church planters.

Below are six Church Planting truths that compel us to continually start new churches.

1. Jesus' Himself sent out _____ and calls us to do the _____.
2. Real success is measured by our _____ capacity rather than not our _____ capacity.
3. _____ is always more effective than _____.
4. New churches _____ than older ones.
5. Every year in America _____ churches close forever.
6. New churches require new _____.

(For more information about why we plant churches see Appendix (C) Page 35)

What does Pillar's future look like?

1) Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3) Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. - Acts 13:1-3

We look to the past to see our future...

The Jerusalem Church

VS.

The Antioch Church

"The founding of the Antioch church may be the most important movement in church planting history. Antioch would send missionaries throughout the world. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit the Antioch church became the first great missionary sending church (Acts 13:3). On the other hand, the Jerusalem church turned increasingly inward and lost much of its vision, finally disappearing like the judaizers of the early Christian movement. In contrast, the Antioch congregation reached the world by becoming the first church planting church."

– Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, p. 50.

Five for Five

Five goals to help us fulfill Gods Mission (2009-2014)

1. I see a day when _____ are becoming disciples of Jesus at Pillar Church.

"The Lord was adding to their number day by day, those who were being saved" – Acts 2:47

- We want to grow... we are praying and planning for others to continually be added to the size of our congregation.
- We prepare our systems and procedures to accommodate more people than we currently have because we expect that God will send growth to our church. We want to be prepared for whatever growth God gives.

2. I see a day when the _____ of S.W. Bali have church and a missionary.

"go into every nation teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." –Matt 28:19

- Pillar Church has formed a partnership with the International Mission Board (IMB). The IMB is the largest mission sending organization in the world and currently has more than 5000 church planters positioned all over the world. The IMB is seeking churches to assist in areas where there are not yet churches or missionaries. We have chosen a particular unreached people group (UPG) to serve over the next several years.
- Indonesia is one of the largest Muslim nations in the world nearly the width and population of the United States. Indonesia has more than 17,000 separate islands (6000 of which are inhabited). Bali is a relatively small island with slightly more than 4,000,000 people. The majority of Balinese people (3.9 million) are Hindus. The Loloan people live on the S.W.

shore of Bali and have a population of approximately 100,000 people. To our knowledge there are no missionaries, churches or Christians or missionaries among the Loloan people. Our goal is to plant a church and provide a missionary to this UPG.

- Pillar Church will conduct trips to Bali several times each year and provide opportunities for members to help bring the Gospel to the Loloan.

3. I see a day that we _____ people.

“Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” –Matt 28:19

- We want to continually focus on spreading the Gospel. We are praying for the day when God will save many people through the ministry of our church. We are praying that God will allow us to baptize 20 new believers on the same day!

4. I see a day when pillar is reaching, teaching and unleashing _____ a year.

“Train faithful men who will be able to teach others also” –2 Timothy 2:2

- We are in the process of formalizing an internship program for young men who desire to plant churches. The process will include elements like, resourceing, theological education, practical training.
- We pray that church planters and missionaries are being raised up out of our church.

5. I see a day when _____ gather for worship in our churches.



What affiliations and partnerships does Pillar have?

Q: As a church, one of the most common questions we get is, “what kind of church are you” or “What denomination are you?” Some will even ask, “What does the SBC stand for in your church name?”

A: We are part of the Southern Baptist Convention.

What it means to be Southern Baptist:

1. It means that we agree theologically with the Southern Baptist Conventions theological positions.
2. It means that we join 42,000 other churches that have the same theological convictions that we do in contributing to a shared mission fund called the cooperative program. That fund pays for more than 10,000 missionaries worldwide.

What being Southern Baptist doesn't mean:

1. It doesn't mean that we are governed by the SBC.
2. It doesn't mean that the SBC owns any of our property.
3. It doesn't mean that our offerings go to them.

Three Affiliations:

- **Stafford Baptist Church, Stafford, VA**

Stafford Baptist Church is the parent church of Pillar. In 2005 a Group of 19 from Stafford Baptist served as the core team for the new church plant. Our relationship with Stafford Baptist is still critical. Stafford Baptist provides office space for us and our church planters throughout the week. And cooperates with us on many mission projects.

- **Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, TN**

Since its organization in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to over 16 million members who worship in more than 42,000 churches in the United States. Southern Baptists sponsor about 5,000 home missionaries serving the United States, Canada, Guam and the Caribbean, as well as sponsoring more than 5,000 foreign missionaries in 153 nations of the world.

- On a local level we associate with the The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and are in partnership with them on several church planting projects.
 - On a national level we associate with the North American Mission Board and are in partnership with them in the training of new church planters.
 - On an international level we associate with the International Mission Board and are in partnership with them for both the Iceland Project and our work in Bali.
- **Our Church Plants, Scattered**
 - The Church at Quantico, Quantico, VA - 2005 - (CP) Naethan Hendrix
 - Iceland Project, Reykjavik, Iceland - 2006 - (CP) Clint Clifton
 - Lakeside Community Church, Locust Grove, VA - 2007 (CP) Jonathan Davis
 - Aletheia Church, Norfolk, VA 2008 - (CP) Jamie Limato
 - Church Planters to Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland - 2008 (CP) Colby Garman

What are the essential beliefs at Pillar?

“In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity”

- St. Augustine

A. In essential beliefs, we have _____.

Ephesians 4:4-6 - “There is one Body and one Spirit... there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...”

B. In non-essential beliefs, we have _____.

Romans 14:1,4,12,22 - “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.”

C. In all of our beliefs, we show _____.

I Corinthians 13:2 - “If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains - but have no love, I amount to nothing at all.”

In the church unity is of utmost importance. Churches tend to make primary issues that should be secondary and make secondary issues that should be primary. We feel like it is important to identify what issues are primary (closed handed) had what issues are secondary (open handed).

Closed handed Issues of doctrine

God. God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equals and one God.



The Father: God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.

The Son: Jesus Christ is the only Son of God. He is fully God and fully man. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death, and ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of God.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He lives in all Christians from the moment of salvation, providing them with power for living and guidance in doing what is right.

Scripture. The Bible is God's word to us. Human authors wrote the Bible under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because of its divine inspiration, the Bible is the supreme source of truth for all people. We believe that every word of the Bible is inspired and that, in its original form, the Bible has no error. We also believe that the Bible plays an indispensable role for the follower of Christ. It builds up, transforms, encourages, corrects, and protects the Christian as he or she studies and applies it.

Man. Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Man's decision to sin caused a division between Creator and creation leaving man in need of a Savior.

Salvation. Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

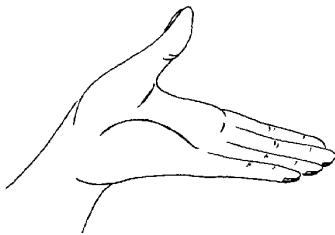
Evangelism and Church Planting. It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ, and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. We believe that disciples are most effectively made in the context of the local church. Therefore, church planting and missions are of utmost importance. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every Christian to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ.

Ordinances. There are two ordinances for the New Testament church. The first, baptism, is the immersion of a believer in water. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. Second, the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby followers memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Open handed Issues of doctrine

(Selected Examples)

End Time Views. There are a lot of views on the end times and a lot of interpretations of the prophetic passages in the New Testament. Two members may take opposing viewpoints on eschatological issues and still agree on essential ones. This is not to say that both views are correct, but that neither is worth sacrificing unity over.



Election vs. Free Will. Some Christians of the reformed tradition believe that the Holy Spirit is the only agent who effects regeneration of Christians. While others argue that there is cooperation between the divine and the human in the regeneration process. This is an important argument with Godly, Bible loving Christians on both sides. This is not to say that both views are correct, but that neither is worth sacrificing unity over.

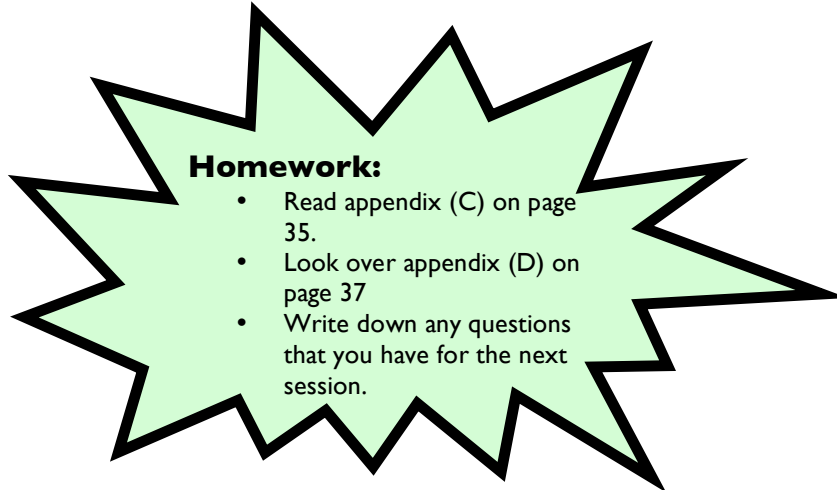
Education. Many Christian parents place their children in the public school system in support of public education. Others believe that private Christian education or home schooling is the best decision. The issue should be discussed, debated and prayed over among those in the church but should never be reasons for division and disunity among the body of Christ.

Giving. Some believe that giving a full 10% of one's income as a "tithing" to the church is a Biblical mandate while others believe that the scripture intends for us to be generous and sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit concerning the amount that we give. Valid arguments exist for both viewpoints but unity among the family of God is more critical than either.

Bible Translations. Some Christians believe that the King James Version of the Bible is the only inspired version in the English language while others prefer other versions. Still others mix and match Bible translations depending on the setting. This is not to say that one translation of the Bible is not better than another, but that no translation is worth division in the church.

Can you think of some other “open handed issues”?

For supporting scriptures see Appendix (D) “Pillar Church Constitution” Page 37



What are Life Groups?

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” – Hebrews 10:23-25

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” – Acts 2:46-47

What are they:

Life Groups are a simple 1-2 hour small group meeting of anywhere from 5-25 people in attendance. Some Life Groups meet on Sunday's before or after the worship hour while others meet at various times throughout the week. The time together consists of prayer, worship, fellowship and bible study.

Because Life Groups are relational in nature they are beneficial to people at every stage of their spiritual pilgrimage. Take a look at the stages below and not how you think a Life group meeting could benefit them?

Non- Christian:

New- Christian:

Struggling Christian:

Growing Christian:

Mature Christian:

Our Curriculum:

The Life Group Leader is responsible for choosing the curriculum, meeting time and location for the Life Group. Some Life Groups eat a meal together each week, while others simply gather, some host periodic parties and community projects while others focus all of their time on study and prayer. Sometimes small groups work through a book of the bible and sometimes the group will address a particular topic for several weeks. Here are some examples of studies that have been done in the past:

- Unlocking the Bible Story
- Let the Nations Be Glad
- The Book of Daniel
- Stewardship
- The Book of Acts
- Experiencing God

Being in a life group should help you to know Jesus and make Him known.

- Get to know people better.
- Understand the Bible better.
- Follow Christ closer.
- Pray for the people in your group.

Our Life Group System for 2009:

Starting in January of 2009 we will begin a Semester system for Life Groups. During the course of the year there will be two study sessions, a summer outreach project and three one month breaks. We will Spend 6 Months in study, 3 Months outreach and missions and 3 Months on break.

2009 Life Group Schedule

- **Study Term 1** - January 15th – May 15th
- **Break** – May 16th – June 14th
- **Summer Outreach Projects:** June 15th – August 15th
- **Break** – August 16th – September 14th
- **Study Term 2** - September 15th – December 15th
- **Break** – December 16th – January 14th

How can I use my gifts to serve Christ at Pillar?

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. - Romans 12:3-8

In section twelve we are going to ask you to share some of your talents, passions and skills with us so that we can know what areas of the body you are best suited for. In this chapter we will inform you of the ministries that currently exist at pillar and let you know of the opportunities that exist within those ministries.

The Bible teaches that each person has an important place in the Body of Christ and that every Christian has gifts for the building up of the body. Here are some of the spiritual gifts we see in the Bible.

- **ADMINISTRATION:** 1 Cor. 12:28 - to steer the body toward the accomplishment of God-given goals and directives by planning, organizing, and supervising others. (Greek Word: kubernesis - to steer, guide, helmsmen)
- **APOSTLE:** Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28 - to be sent forth to new frontiers with the gospel, providing leadership over church bodies and maintaining authority over spiritual matters pertaining to the church. (Greek Word: apostolos - 'apo'=from 'stello'=send; one sent forth)
- **DISCERNMENT:** 1 Cor. 12:10 - to clearly distinguish truth from error by judging whether the behavior or teaching is from God, Satan, human error, or human power.
- **EVANGELISM:** Eph. 4:11 - to be a messenger of the good news of the Gospel. (Greek Word: euaggelistes - preacher of gospel; eu=well, angelos=message - messenger of good)
- **EXHORTATION:** Rom. 12:8 - to come along side of someone with words of encouragement, comfort, consolation, and counsel to help them be all God wants them to be. (Greek Word: paraklesis - calling to one's side)
- **FAITH:** 1 Cor. 12:8-10 - to be firmly persuaded of God's power and promises to accomplish His will and purpose and to display such a confidence in Him and His Word that circumstances and obstacles do not shake that conviction.
- **GIVING:** Rom. 12:8 - to share what material resources you have with liberality and cheerfulness without thought of return.
- **HEALING:** 1 Cor. 12:9,28,30 - to be used as a means through which God makes people whole physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.
- **HELPS:** 1 Cor. 12:28 - to render support or assistance to others in the body so as to free them up for ministry.
- **HOSPITALITY:** 1 Pet. 4:9,10 - to warmly welcome people, even strangers, into one's home or church as a means of serving those in need of food or lodging. (Greek Word: philoxenos - love of strangers; 'philos'=love; 'xenos'=stranger)
- **KNOWLEDGE:** 1 Cor. 12:8 - to seek to learn as much about the Bible as possible for the building up of the body.

- **LEADERSHIP:** Rom. 12:8 - to stand before the people in such a way as to attend to the direction of the body with such care and diligence so as to motivate others to get involved in the accomplishment of these goals.
- **MERCY:** Rom. 12:8 - to be sensitive toward those who are suffering, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally, so as to feel genuine sympathy with their misery, speaking words of compassion but more so caring for them with deeds of love to help alleviate their distress.
- **MIRACLES:** I Cor. 12:10,28 - to be enabled by God to perform mighty deeds which witnesses acknowledge to be of supernatural origin and means.
- **MISSIONARY:** Eph. 3:6-8 - to be able to minister in another culture.
- **PASTOR:** Eph. 4:11 - to be responsible for spiritually caring for, protecting, guiding, and feeding a group of believers entrusted to one's care.
- **PROPHECY:** Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:10; Eph. 4:11 - to speak forth the message of God to His people. (Greek Word: prophetes - the forth-telling of the will of God; 'pro'=forth; 'phemi'=to speak)
- **SERVICE:** Rom. 12:7 - to identify undone tasks in God's work, however menial, and use available resources to get the job done (Greek Word: diakonia - deacon, attendant 'diako'=to run errands)
- **TEACHING:** Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11 - to instruct others in the Bible in a logical, systematic way so as to communicate pertinent information for true understanding and growth
- **TONGUES:** I Cor. 12:10; 14:27-28 - to speak in a language not previously learned so unbelievers can hear God's message in their own language or the body be edified.
- **INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:** I Cor. 12:10; 14:27,28 - to translate the message of someone who has spoken in tongues
- **VOLUNTARY POVERTY:** I Cor. 13:3 - to purposely live an impoverished lifestyle to serve and aid others with your material resources
- **WISDOM:** I Cor. 12:8 - to apply knowledge to life in such a way as to make spiritual truths quite relevant and practical in proper decision-making and daily life situations.

Once you have identified areas that you believe God has gifted you, please look over the areas of ministry at Pillar Church where you can exercise those gifts.

Set Up/Pack Up Team

Ministry Leader: Andy Wire

Description: The set up team gathers each Sunday morning at 9:00 to unload the trailer and get all the supplies necessary in place for a fully functional worship environment and children's ministry space.

Needs: Hands from 9:00am -10am and immediately after the service each Sunday

Time Commitment: 30 min per week.

Follow Up

Ministry Leader: Ammin Spencer

Description: Takes each of the visitors from Sunday morning and makes a follow up visit sometime during the week. This generally involves bringing by a loaf of bread and a card thanking them for the visit. You may also be following up with phone calls or cards.

Needs: Help one night each week to deliver bread, make calls and write cards.

Time Commitment: 30 min per week.

Ten Fold

Ministry Leader: Bryan Scott

Description: Ten Fold is the weekly teen meeting that takes place each Tuesday evening at 7:00pm. The meeting includes music, preaching and games..

Needs: Ten Fold is always seeking teens to attend and adults to serve as counselors and helpers during the weekly meeting

Time Commitment: Attend 1,2,3 or 4 of the monthly 10 fold meetings. Each meeting lasts for 2 hours.

Tech Team

Ministry Leader: Andy Wire

Description: Tech team takes care of the technical aspects of Sunday morning such as the sound system, lighting and Media presentations.

Needs: Help on Sunday mornings running the sound system or Media Shout for the worship service.

Time Commitment: 1.5 hours periodically on a Sunday morning, as well as periodic training .

Life Groups

Ministry Leader: Andy Wire

Description: Life Groups are a simple 1-2 hour small group meeting of anywhere from 5-25 people in attendance. Some Life groups meet on Sunday mornings before or after the worship hour. Others meet at various times throughout the week. The time together consists of prayer, worship, fellowship and bible study.

Needs: Group leaders, facilitators, hosts and guests

Time Commitment: 1 night a week for 9 months of the year.

International Mission Projects

Ministry Leader: Clint Clifton

Description: Pillar Church participates in international mission projects in various countries throughout the world.

Needs: Team Members, administrators, contributors.

Time Commitment: two weeks per year

Children's Ministry

Ministry Leader: Jennifer Clifton

Description: Pillar Church currently has three children's ministry classes and consists of a nursery, preschool and school aged class.

Needs: Teachers, assistants and substitutes

Time Commitment: two hours a month.

Men's Ministry

Ministry Leader: Tim Long

Description: The men's ministry meets periodically for fellowship, prayer encouragement. In the past the men's ministry has consisted of monthly men's breakfast and a summer camping trip.

Needs: Administrators, participants

Time Commitment: Periodic

Women's Ministry

Ministry Leader: Jennifer Clifton

Description: Women's ministry holds periodic Bible studies and discussion groups for encouragement and instruction. Usually an annual retreat takes place in the summer.

Needs: Administrators, teachers and participants.

Time Commitment: Periodic

Greeters

Ministry Leader: Andy Wire

Description: Greeters stand at the entrance to the building on Sunday mornings and distribute bulletins and visitors packets. Greeters have a friendly smile and a warm greeting to those who attend.

Needs: Greeters

Time Commitment: 30 min one Sunday a month.

Church Planting

Ministry Leader: Clint Clifton

Description: Pillar Church is active planting other churches. Church plants are both local, regional and international. Church planting requires a variety of gifts from administration to preaching to prayer.

Needs: Church Planters, Core team members, supporters, contributors

Time Commitment: Various

Discipleship

Ministry Leader: Clint Clifton

Description: Discipleship is a one on one meeting that helps someone grow into maturity in the Christian faith. Personal discipleship encourages personal holiness, growth and accountability between those who participate.

Needs: Disciplers, Disciples

Time Commitment: A few hours each week.

Worship and Music

Ministry Leader: Amanda Long

Description: Leading corporate worship is a great privilege and responsibility. Pillar is always in search of musicians, singers and artists to assist with the worship at pillar.

Needs: Musicians, singers, artists.

Time Commitment: 3-4 hours a week.

What will you expect of me if I become a member?

Each member of Pillar Church is asked to commit:

1. **Time:** This involves committing time to personal growth through discipleship in small groups with other believers and through regular fellowship. This includes attending Sunday morning worship on a consistent basis (Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 6:33).
2. **Talents:** The New Testament clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit has uniquely gifted every believer for the purpose of serving God and each other. Each person's gift is needed. Therefore, each member will seek to identify, develop, and exercise his/her spiritual gifts (Romans 12:4-6, 16:12).
3. **Treasures:** The New Testament says much about the godly use of money. It reminds us we are bought by the blood of Christ and all we have belongs to Him. The scriptures teach that each believer should freely give to support the work of Christ. Each member is encouraged to support the local body according to how God has blessed him or her financially, for this brings honor to Christ (Matthew 6:19; 2 Corinthians 8:9-11).
4. **Teaching:** Pillar Church is committed to the doctrines set out in Article III of this document. Pillar Church seeks to find leaders who will uphold and teach these doctrines plainly. Members are encouraged to learn and hold to these truths. If one disagrees on key points due to outside teaching or reading, they are asked to take their issues to the Elders for discussion and agree to neither publicly nor privately seek to influence others towards their views.
5. **Tongue:** Scripture warns us of the destructive ability of the tongue. It is essential for each member to commit the use of their tongue to the building up of each other and to the fostering of peace and unity (James 3:3-11, 2 Thessalonians 3:3-12).

Can I tell you a little bit about myself?

Membership Information

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Home Phone: () _____ - _____

Email: _____ Work Phone: () _____ - _____

Cell Phone: () _____ - _____

Personal Information:

Are you Married? ___ Yes ___ No

What is your spouse's name? _____

Do you have any Children? ___ Yes ___ No

If So, Tell us about your children:

1. _____ Age: _____

2. _____ Age: _____

3. _____ Age: _____

4. _____ Age: _____

5. _____ Age: _____

What is your vocation: _____

Please take a moment to explain your background with faith.

Include the churches and denominations you have been involved

In over the course of your Christian life: _____

Please look over the list of spiritual gifts on page 25 and 26. Place a check mark next to the gifts you believe you possess:

- Administration
- Apostleship
- Discernment
- Evangelism
- Exhortation
- Faith
- Giving
- Healing
- Helps
- Hospitality
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Missions
- Mercy
- Miracles
- Pastoring
- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching
- Tongues
- Poverty
- Wisdom

What are your hobbies or interests? _____

Please check those that generally apply to you: I am...

<input type="checkbox"/> Happy	<input type="checkbox"/> Shy	<input type="checkbox"/> Into Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> Into music
<input type="checkbox"/> Smart	<input type="checkbox"/> A reader	<input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal
<input type="checkbox"/> Candid	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative	<input type="checkbox"/> Courageous	<input type="checkbox"/> Generous
<input type="checkbox"/> Indecisive	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind	<input type="checkbox"/> Focused
<input type="checkbox"/> Modest	<input type="checkbox"/> Open minded	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctual
<input type="checkbox"/> Realistic	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined	<input type="checkbox"/> Reliable
<input type="checkbox"/> Sincere	<input type="checkbox"/> Hard working	<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest
<input type="checkbox"/> Humble	<input type="checkbox"/> Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/> Immature	<input type="checkbox"/> Silly

In the space provided please mark your level of expertise in the given area:

- V – Very Skilled
- S – Somewhat Skilled
- L – Little knowledge
- N – No knowledge

<input type="checkbox"/> Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Auto Repair	<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> General Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Parenting
<input type="checkbox"/> Social networking	<input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Editing (text)	<input type="checkbox"/> Film Making	<input type="checkbox"/> Photography
<input type="checkbox"/> Video production	<input type="checkbox"/> Computers	<input type="checkbox"/> Broadcasting	<input type="checkbox"/> Safty/Security

Your Commitment to membership at Pillar Church:

- I have been through all three sessions of the group life material either with a church leader or I have listened to the audio versions on the website.
- I have personally accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord.
- I have been baptized according to the New Testament Pattern.
- I am willing to commit myself to serve Christ through the ministry of Pillar Church.
- I affirm the Pillar Church Constitution found in appendix (D) of this book.
- I agree to the membership covenant on page 26.

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix (A)

Baptism & Church Membership (Excerpt)

By Dr. John Piper www.desiringgod.org

1) The privilege and responsibility of have some governing powers of the church.

Consider the implication of Matthew 18:15-17 where “the church” (*ekklēsia*) appears to be the final court of appeal in matters of church authority as it relates to membership.

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

If there is no church membership, how can you define the group that will take up this sensitive and weighty matter of exhorting the unrepentant person and finally rendering a judgment about his standing in the community? It is hard to believe that just anyone who showed up claiming to be a Christian could be a part of that gathering. Surely “the church” must be a definable group to handle such a weighty matter.

2) The possibility of being excluded from the church (excommunication).

There is another implication from Matthew 18:15-17, namely, that the unrepentant person is accountable to a group of people. This is an amazing event: formally excluding a person from “the church” so that he becomes to you “as a Gentile and a tax collector”—that is, an unbeliever. The same kind of exclusion is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. How is this possible if the person is not considered a member of something from which he can be excluded? So both the person’s liability to excommunication and the involvement of “the church” in the process imply that the one being charged is a member and the group settling the matter are members.

3) A commitment to be held accountable by a Council of Elders to believe a basic affirmation and to live a basic covenant.

The point here is that without membership, who is it that the New Testament says must submit to leaders? Some kind of expressed willingness or covenant or agreement or commitment must precede submission. Consider the way the New Testament talks about the relationship of the church to her leaders.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you (*proistamenous humōn*) in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who rule well (*Hoi kalōs proestōtes presbuteroi*) be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

How is this leadership and this submission to function where there is no membership defining who has made the commitment to be led and who has been chosen as leaders? If we downplay the

importance of membership, it is difficult to see how we could take these commands seriously and practically.

4) The privilege of being cared for with the primacy and special benefit of a local covenant family of believers.

When the pastors and elders extend their care beyond the membership, it does not mean that there is no primacy to members. Consider Acts 20:28 where Paul tells the elders how to care for their flock.

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.

This verse does not say elders cannot visit unbelievers or those who are not yet members. But it does make clear that their first responsibility is to a particular flock. Does it not make sense that this flock would have definition and limits? Who are we as elders and pastors responsible for? For whom will we give an account to God?

For these four reasons we believe that membership in the local church is of crucial importance. A person who continues in a state of disconnectedness from membership in a local church is walking in serious disobedience to God.

Appendix (B)

Our Logo:



Our Logo was designed in 2005 by Matthew Gideon of MWG Media Works in Austin, TX



In architecture there are five types of Pillars. We chose the composite pillar for the following reasons:

- It is beautiful as the bride of Christ should be –Eph 5
- It has leafy growth under the cap symbolizing life.
- It has two swirls on the cap representing our two purposes.

Symbolically the pillar can have several meanings. In heraldry, the pillar signifies fortitude and constancy. Fortitude was also the reason that many pillars were erected, such as in ancient Egypt, to commemorate important events, with esoteric secrets engraved on them. We read in the Book of Judges (ix. 6) of Abimelech, that a “pillar was erected in Shechem” when he was made king; and (2 Kings xi. 14) it is said that a pillar was raised when Joash was made king, “as the manner was”, indicating that this was common practice. Thoth, the father of all wisdom, was said to have concealed his books by burying them under a pillar. A pillar is said to represent the bridge between heaven and earth.

Appendix (C)

WHY PLANT CHURCHES, ANYWAY?

(this is a shortened version of an article by the same title available on the resource section of our website)

by Tim Keller

The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the 1) numerical growth of the Body of Christ in any city, and the 2) continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else - not crusades, outreach programs, para-church ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes - will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.

Jesus' Essential call was to plant churches: Virtually all the great evangelistic challenges of the New Testament are basically calls to plant churches, not simply to share the faith. The "Great Commission" (Matt 28: 18-20) is not just a call to "make disciples", but to "baptize." In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporation into a worshipping community with accountability and boundaries.

Bible's premise: The only way to truly be sure you are creating permanent new Christians is to plant new churches. Why? Much traditional evangelism aims to get a "decision" for Christ. Experience, however, shows us that many of these decisions disappear and never result in changed lives.

Why? Many (most?) decisions are not really conversions, but often only the beginning of a journey seeking God. Only a person who is being evangelized in the context of an on-going worshipping and shepherding community can be sure of finally coming home into vital, saving faith. This is why a leading missiologist like C. Peter Wagner can say, "Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven."

Paul's whole strategy was to plant urban churches. The greatest missionary in history, St. Paul, had a rather simple, two-fold strategy. First, he went into the largest city in the region (cf Acts 16:9,12), and second, he planted churches in each city (cf. Titus 1:5 "appoint elders in every town.") Once Paul had done that, he could say that he had preached the gospel in a region and that he had no more work to do there (cf. 15:19, 23).

Bible's premises: a) The way to most permanently influence a country was through its chief cities, and b) The way to most permanently influence a city was to plant churches in it.

New churches best reach new generations, new residents, and new people groups. Younger adults are disproportionately found in new congregations. Why? Older churches' traditions (time of worship, length of service, emotional responsiveness, sermon topics, leadership style, emotional atmosphere and thousands of other tiny customs) reflect the sensibilities of leaders from the older generations who have the influence and money to control church life.

New residents are better reached by new congregations. In long-established churches it may require a tenure of 10 years before you are allowed into places of leadership and influence but in a new church, new residents tend to have equal power with long-time area residents.

New social groups are better reached by new congregations. Examples: 1) New white-collar commuters in a former farming community will find older churches oriented to the original social group. 2) New Hispanics in a former Anglo community will find a new, deliberately bi-racial church far more able to create 'cultural space' for newcomers than older churches. 3) New immigrant groups always can only be reached by new churches ministering in their own language. Summary: New congregations empower new people much more readily than older churches. This means church planting is not only for "frontier regions" or "pagan" countries that we are trying to see become Christian. Christian countries will have to maintain vigorous, extensive church planting simply to stay Christian!

New churches best reach the unchurched. Dozens of studies confirm that the average new church gains most of its members (60-80%) from among people outside any worshipping community, while churches over 10-15 years of age gain 80-90% of new members from people moving from other congregations. Therefore new churches will bring 6-8 times better at drawing new people into the Body of Christ.

As a congregation ages, powerful internal institutional pressure lead it to allocate most of its resources and energy toward the concerns of it members, rather than toward those outside its walls. Older congregations therefore have a stability and steadiness that many people thrive on and need. Many non-Christians will only be reached by churches with long roots in the community and the trappings of stability and respectability. But new churches, of necessity, are forced to focus far more of its energies on the needs of its non-members and becomes much more sensitive to the sensibilities of non-believers. There is also a cumulative effect. In the first two years of our Christian walk, we have far more close, face-to-face relationships with non-Christians than we do later. Thus new Christians attract non-believers to services 5-10 times more than a long-time Christian. New believers beget new believers.

What does this mean practically? The only wide scale way to bring in lots of new Christians to the Body of Christ in a permanent way is to plant new churches.

Appendix (D)

CONSTITUTION OF PILLAR CHURCH

Southbridge, VA

PREAMBLE

This Constitution has been created in order to: preserve and secure the principles of our faith; preserve the liberties of each individual member of Pillar Church; ensure freedom of action and independence from any religious body or organization; and provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be "Pillar Church SBC". The church formally organized on March 30th, 2008.

ARTICLE II

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Pillar Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.

ARTICLE III

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

Section A. God. God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equals and one God.

The Father: God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.

The Son: Jesus Christ is the only Son of God. He is fully God and fully man. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death, and ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of God.

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He lives in all Christians from the moment of salvation, providing them with power for living and guidance in doing what is right.

John 16:7-13; Galatians 5:22-25; John 4:24; 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4; Philippians 2:5-11; Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4.

Section B. Scripture. The Bible is God's word to us. Human authors wrote the Bible under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because of its divine inspiration, the Bible is the supreme source of truth for all people. We believe that every word of the Bible is inspired and that, in its original form, the Bible has no error. We also believe that the Bible plays an indispensable role for the follower of Christ. It builds up, transforms, encourages, corrects, and protects the Christian as he or she studies and applies it.

Psalms 119:11; Acts 20:32; Ephesians 5:26; 6:17; Exodus 24:4; Psalms 40:8; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:105; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; John 16:12-15

Section C. Man. Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Man's decision to sin caused a division between Creator and creation leaving man in need of a Savior.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

Section D. Salvation. Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

1. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.
2. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal, upon principles of His righteousness, of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.
3. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
4. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

Section E. Evangelism and Church Planting. It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ, and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. We believe that disciples are most effectively made in the context of the local church. Therefore, church planting and missions are of utmost importance. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every Christian to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

Section F. Ordinances. There are two ordinances for the New Testament church. The first, baptism, is the immersion of a believer in water. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. Second, the Lord's Supper, is a symbolic act of obedience whereby followers memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

ARTICLE IV

STATEMENT OF STRUCTURE

Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). He is the source of all that the Church is and does. His Word, the Bible, is our standard for every decision. Pillar Church's existence is for His pleasure and purpose alone.

Pillar Church believes that all Christians are ministers and priests of God (1 Peter 2:5-10), that all Christians have received spiritual gifts from God (Romans 12:3-6), and that all Christians have a special place of service in the church body (1 Corinthians 12). Pillar Church recognizes that God's plan for church leadership is not specified in the pages of the Bible. Therefore, Pillar Church's structure follows the example modeled by the early Christian church as recorded in the New Testament. Where Scripture is silent we seek through prayer and biblical principals to mold the structure to a form most useful for His work.

Two offices existed in the early Christian church: Elder and Deacon. The term Elder is used synonymously with the terms Bishop, Overseer, and Pastor in the New Testament. For the purpose of this document, we will use the term Elder to represent all four terms.

Section A. Elders. The Elders are made up of members chosen and trained by current Elders and approved at one of the eldership meetings by a unanimous vote. Since the office of an Elder is a biblical one, certain qualifications of spiritual maturity must be met (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The Bible indicates that this office should only be held by men. These men will lead the church and be its primary teachers and shepherds.

1. **Process:** The congregation will be informed of the need of additional Elders and may prayerfully submit names of persons they understand to be qualified for the position. Prospective Elders will be approached and examined by the current Elders. If the candidate shows both willingness and fitness for the office, he will be confirmed with a unanimous decision among the existing Elders.
2. **Responsibilities:** According to the New Testament, Elders are responsible for the primary leadership and oversight of the church through prayerful discernment and the study of Scripture. Elders defend and teach proper doctrine, provide overall direction, administer redemptive discipline, and model lives of distinction before the body.
 - a) **Doctrine:** The Elders are responsible to ensure that the teaching of the church is properly in line with the teaching of the Bible. The Elders should both promote sound doctrine within the church and defend against unbiblical doctrine.
 - b) **Direction:** The Elders are responsible for the overall direction of the church.
 - c) **Discipline:** The Elders are responsible to apply restorative discipline to members of Pillar Church as described in Matthew 18:15-20.
 - d) **Distinction:** The Elders are responsible to model proper Christian living before the body.
3. **Roles:** The Elders will be responsible for filling the following roles within the church.
 - a) **Pastor:** The Pastor is an Elder sharing all the responsibilities and qualifications cited in Section A of this document. In the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11) the term Pastor is used to describe the spiritual gift of shepherding; therefore, the job of Pastor at Pillar Church is primarily the same as the job of an Elder. In addition to his job as an Elder, the Pastor at Pillar Church is responsible for managing the staff to prepare and administer the details of ministry during the course of the week.

- b) **Chairman:** The chairman will be able to sit in consultation on all meetings. He will set the agenda and preside at all the meetings of the Elders. If possible, he should represent Pillar Church at the SBCV annual meeting. He will counsel with the other Elders to oversee and direct the work of the church.
 - c) **Recording Secretary:** The recording secretary will keep the minutes of all the meetings of the church and Elders and take care of the correspondence in the name of the church as assigned. It is the responsibility of the recording secretary to maintain an accurate record of all the members of the church, plus any other historical records of Pillar Church.
 - d) **Financial Officer:** The Financial Officer (F.O.) is the principal steward of financial policies and procedures. The F.O. will oversee the following functions: 1) to manage the church's relationship with government taxing authorities (i.e. submit tax funds, reports); 2) to submit policy and procedure recommendations to the Elders; 3) to submit reports required by the Elders; 4) to deposit all funds in a timely fashion; 5) to keep confidential records of all contributors; 6) to oversee the payment of expenses as authorized by the budget or congregation with checks, which are required to have two signatures. The F.O. will be responsible to the other Elders and will work with a Financial Team appointed to help with Pillar's financial policies. The term of office is two years.
4. **Resignation:** When an Elder, to include the Pastor, chooses to terminate his relationship with the church, he shall present a letter of resignation. For the Pastor, he should provide notice at least thirty days prior to the date of termination.
 5. **Removal of Elders:** Upon recommendation and the unanimous vote of the remaining Elders, an Elder may be dismissed at any time.

Section B. Deacons. The role of the deacon in the New Testament is a role of service. Deacons assist the Elders by providing practical help with the basic necessities of life. Deacons assume a variety of tasks in order to assure that the ministry of the Word and prayer remain the foremost objective of the church. A deacon's role is most effectively performed as a marital team.

1. **Resignation:** When a Deacon chooses to terminate his relationship with the church, he shall present a letter of resignation to the Elders at least thirty days prior to the date of termination.
2. **Removal of Deacons:** Upon recommendation and the unanimous vote of the remaining Elders, an Elder may be dismissed at any time.

Section C. Staff or Salaried Personnel. Salaried staff is called at Pillar Church's discretion according to ministry needs. The search and hiring of staff personnel is the responsibility of the Pastor. All hires will be subject to a unanimous approval of the Elders. The job description, responsibilities, salaries, and benefits of all staff will also be determined by the Elders and will be reviewed annually. All paid staff is directly responsible to the Pastor.

1. **Resignation:** When a member of the staff chooses to terminate his relationship with the church, he shall present a letter of resignation to the Elders at least thirty days prior to the date of termination.
2. **Dismissal:** Dismissal for any member of the staff shall be by decision of the Elders. To dismiss the Pastor, the Elders must pass a unanimous vote at a duly constituted eldership meeting.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament teaches and illustrates, by the early church's example, that God intended His people to join together in local, definable groups. These local bodies were made up of people who had confessed

Jesus as Lord and who were willing to serve Him by identifying and committing themselves to a particular local body. These groups of dedicated people become powerful and effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. In order for this to be accomplished, we recognize the need for commitment and accountability that only formal membership brings. Although people are free to minister at Pillar Church without membership, several key ministry positions require this level of commitment. They are as follows: Elders, Deacons, Life Group Leaders, ministry staff, and ministry leaders.

Section A. Criteria. Membership will be open to anyone who:

4. Is personally trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
5. Has been baptized according to the New Testament pattern of baptism by immersion as a personal witness of their faith in Christ.
6. Is willing to commit themselves to serve Jesus Christ through the ministry and vision of Pillar Church.

Section B. Procedure. Membership can be applied for by:

5. Attending Pillar Church's membership class.
6. Affirming the church constitution.
7. Affirming the church membership covenant that follows.

Section C. Covenant. Each member of Pillar Church is asked to commit:

6. Time: This involves committing time to personal growth through discipleship in small groups with other believers and through regular fellowship. This includes attending Sunday morning worship on a consistent basis (Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 6:33).
7. Talents: The New Testament clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit has uniquely gifted every believer for the purpose of serving God and each other. Each person's gift is needed. Therefore, each member will seek to identify, develop, and exercise his/her spiritual gifts (Romans 12:4-6, 16:12).
8. Treasures: The New Testament says much about the godly use of money. It reminds us we are bought by the blood of Christ and all we have belongs to Him. The scriptures teach that each believer should freely give to support the work of Christ. Each member is encouraged to support the local body according to how God has blessed him or her financially, for this brings honor to Christ (Matthew 6:19; 2 Corinthians 8:9-11).
9. Teaching: Pillar Church is committed to the doctrines set out in Article III of this document. Pillar Church seeks to find leaders who will uphold and teach these doctrines plainly. Members are encouraged to learn and hold to these truths. If one disagrees on key points due to outside teaching or reading, they are asked to take their issues to the Elders for discussion and agree to neither publicly nor privately seek to influence others towards their views.
10. Tongue: Scripture warns us of the destructive ability of the tongue. It is essential for each member to commit the use of their tongue to the building up of each other and to the fostering of peace and unity (James 3:3-11, 2 Thessalonians 3:3-12).

Section D. Removal from membership. Removal from membership is the responsibility of the Elders. Decisions to remove a member from the fellowship should only take place after the principles of restorative discipline found in Matthew 18 have been properly applied.

Membership can be withdrawn:

1. At the request of the member.
2. By failure to attend worship and other ministry events of Pillar Church for three consecutive months.
3. For reasons of irreconcilable and disruptive difference as defined in the church's policy on church discipline.
4. For reasons of church discipline: Ongoing sin in the member's life will force church Elders to begin the process of restorative church discipline as modeled in Matthew 18:15-20. If restoration does not occur, membership will be withdrawn until restoration and repentance occur.

ARTICLE VI PROCEDURES

Section A. Voting. The Elders must come to a unanimous decision on all matters.

Section B. Meetings.

1. For worship: Pillar Church will meet every Sunday and may schedule any other meetings deemed necessary by the Elders. The Lord's Supper will be practiced regularly and in an open manner to all believers in attendance.
2. For business:
 - a) The fiscal year of the church will be from January 1 to December 31 inclusively.
 - b) The Chairman will preside at all business meetings. When he is absent, a moderator will be chosen by the Elders to preside in his place.
 - c) The Annual Meeting will be held in November for the purpose of approving the annual budget, as well as any other eldership business. The budget must be distributed two weeks prior to the meeting.
 - d) Special business meetings may be called for by the Elders.
 - e) Quorum: A quorum shall consist of all members of the eldership and shall be authorized to act in any ministry and business necessary according to the provision of this document.
 - f) Conduct: For the sake of order, business will be conducted according to the Robert's Rules of Order.

Section C. Church Discipline. The Elders are responsible to apply restorative discipline to members of Pillar Church as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

ARTICLE VII NON-PROFIT STATUS AND DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

This church is not organized for profit.

Section A. Division. In the case of organic division of the church membership, the church assets will belong to those members who abide by this document as determined by the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV).

Section B. Dissolution. Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the church's work cannot continue, the church's assets will be transferred to the SBCV for redistribution to a local fellowship.

Section C. Consolidation. Should the conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of similar Biblical faith is advisable, the Elders are authorized by the church to negotiate the terms of such a consolidation.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENT

This Constitution may be amended provided the proposed amendment is introduced through the Elders by a formal motion at any duly called eldership meeting. Notice of the amendment and meeting to vote upon it will be mailed to all Elders two weeks prior to such a meeting. Adoption requires a unanimous decision among all Elders. At no time will an amendment be adopted that is contrary to these Biblical distinctives:

- A. The Bible is the sole and sufficient guide for faith and practice.
- B. Every person has direct access to God through Jesus Christ.
- C. The church and state are separated in their respective responsibilities.
- D. The church's government is of an eldership form.
- E. Baptism is for believers only and only by immersion.
- F. Membership in the Body of Christ is only for those who have put their faith in Christ.
- G. Christ is the supreme head of the church.
- H. The evangelism of the world is our task.

ARTICLE IX INDEMNIFICATION STATEMENT

For the protection of those who serve through Pillar Church, the Corporation will indemnify any and all persons who may serve or who have served at any time as a Pastor, Associate Pastor, or in another executive level staff position in the church, as a church officer or member of a church board or team, as a youth leader for a church youth organization, or as a teacher or counselor to the church elected or appointed by the church or any board or committee of the church, against any and all expenses, including amounts paid upon judgments, counsel fees, and amounts paid in settlement (before or after suit is commenced) actually and necessarily incurred by such persons in connection with the defense or settlement of any claim, action, suit, or proceeding in which they, or any of them, are made parties, or a party, or which may be asserted against any of them, by reason of being or having been in one or more of the aforesaid positions, except in relation to matters as to which any such person shall be adjudged in any actions, suit, or proceeding to be liable for his own negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duties. Such indemnification shall be in addition to any other rights to which those indemnified may be entitled under any law, by law, agreement or otherwise.

This constitution was ratified on March 30th, 2008 by the Elders of Pillar Church, SBC.

Appendix (E)

Why We Have Male Leadership

An excerpt from, Biblical Eldership: Restoring the Eldership to Its Rightful Place in the Church (Revised) Alexander Strauch (theresurgence.com)

There is much about biblical eldership that offends churchgoing people today: the concept of elders who provide pastoral care, a plurality of pastors, and the idea of so-called "lay" or nonclerical pastor elders. Yet nothing is more objectionable in the minds of many contemporary people than the biblical concept of an all-male eldership. A biblical eldership, however, must be an all-male eldership.

For the Bible-believing Christian, the primary example of male leadership is found in the person of Jesus Christ. The most obvious point is that Christ came into the world as the Son of God, not the daughter of God. His maleness was not an arbitrary matter. It was a theological necessity, absolutely essential to His person and work.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus trained and appointed twelve men whom He called "apostles" (Luke 6:13). Jesus' choice of an all-male apostolate affirmed the creation order as presented in Genesis 2:18-25. Luke informs us that before choosing the Twelve Jesus spent the entire night in prayer with His Father (Luke 6:12). As the perfect Son, in complete obedience and submission to His Father's will, Jesus chose twelve males to be His apostles. These men were God the Father's choice. Jesus' choice of male apostles was based on divine principles and guidance, not local custom or traditions.

As we've seen, the Twelve followed the example of their Lord and Master by appointing seven men, not seven men and women, when they needed to establish an official body of servants to care for the church's widows and funds (Acts 6:1-6). Thirty years after Christ's ascension into heaven, Peter wrote to the churches of northwestern Asia Minor and exhorted his Christian sisters to submit to their husbands in the same way the "holy women" of the Old Testament age did (1 Peter 3:5). He also exhorted husbands to care for their wives and reminded them that their wives were fellow heirs "of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). Thus Peter continued to follow His Lord's example and taught both role distinctions and male-female equality.

The biblical pattern of male leadership continued throughout the New Testament era. Regarding the marriage relationship, Paul could not have stated more pointedly the divine order of the husband-wife relationship. In complete agreement with Peter's instruction on the wife's marital submission, Paul teaches that the husband is empowered and commanded to lead in the marriage relationship and that the wife is instructed to submit "as to the Lord." The following texts speak for themselves:

- * "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22).
- * "But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:24).
- * "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23).
- * "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord" (Col. 3:18)
- * "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine . . . that they [older women] may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored" (Titus 2:1,4,5).

Just as Paul teaches male headship in the family, he teaches male headship in the local church (1 Tim. 2:8-3:7). Because the family is the basic social unit and the man is the established family authority, we should expect that men would become the elders of the larger church family. Consider Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 2:12: "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man." In the same way that every individual family is governed by certain standards of conduct, so the local church family is governed by certain principles of conduct and social arrangement. The letter of 1 Timothy specifically

addresses the issue of proper order and behavior of men, women, and elders in the local church family. To his representative in Ephesus, Paul writes, "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14, 15; italics added).

A major aspect of the church's social arrangement concerns the behavior of women in the congregation. In the church in Ephesus, as a result of false teaching that may have challenged the validity of traditional gender roles, Christian women were acting contrary to acceptable Christian behavior. In order to counter improper female conduct in the church, Paul restates Christian principles of women's conduct: "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Tim. 2:11-14).

First Timothy 2:11-14 should settle the question of women elders. Paul prohibits women from doing two things: (1) teaching the men of the church; and (2) exercising authority over the men.

Note that immediately following his instruction in 1 Timothy 2:11-15, that prohibits women from teaching and leading men, Paul describes the qualifications for those who oversee the local church (1 Tim. 3:1-7). Significantly, the qualifications assume a male subject. Thus the overseer is to be "the husband of one wife" and "one who manages his own household well" (1 Tim. 3:2b,4a). Paul gives no suggestion of women elders in this passage.