



October 19, 2014  
Elder Recommendation



# Introduction

In 2007, Summit Woods Baptist Church adopted a new Constitution and By-Laws which implemented an elder-led form of church polity. In 2009, the first elders were chosen by the congregation and began serving. Building on this necessary and biblical approach to church polity is a constant prayerful mindset and quest for the existing elders. One of the most important priorities of virtually every elders' meeting is our seeking God's direction in recommending men who would serve as new elders.

After much time in prayer and conversation, the elders of Summit Woods joyfully recommend Adam Naler to be affirmed by the congregation as a new elder.

Adam has been a member of Summit Woods since 2006. Adam and his wife Sarah (and their one year old son, Brogan) have been actively serving our congregation in a variety of ways. In addition to their numerous overseas mission trips, Adam has served Summit Woods in teaching Equipping Classes, serving on the Personnel Team, Finance Team (of which he now serves as chairman), the choir ministry, small group leader, and nursery ministry. He has demonstrated a solid character that exemplifies the qualities called for of an elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. His commitment to the local church is evident. Sarah has served faithfully at Rachel House Pregnancy Resource Center, and has been serving on Wednesday evenings as a women's small group leader. She also regularly meets with women for discipleship.

We have spent an extensive amount of time with Adam and his family in both formal settings for discussion of his potentially serving as an elder and informal times that have allowed us the opportunity to get to know them more personally. We are confident in this recommendation. Adam exemplifies the qualities of a solid shepherd and will serve our congregation with both Christ-like humility and biblical strength.

The material you hold in your hands includes his testimony, answers to a host of questions, as well as a timeline of events that will afford our congregation ample opportunity to connect with Adam and hear from him publicly.

We thank God for the privilege of serving as elders at Summit Woods and are excited with the potential of Adam joining the shepherding team. We are available to you to answer your questions and personally talk with you further about Adam and why we believe he is uniquely qualified and ready to serve Summit Woods as a new elder.

Yours for Christ's Church,

Todd Arnold, Bret Capranica, Brandon Ferguson, Brett Harris, and Mark Krystyniak



# Adam Naler

The following questions are some of those asked by the Elders of SWBC during the process of evaluating him for being recommended to the body. His answers serve to demonstrate how his life and views display the qualities called for in Scripture of those who would serve a church as an elder.



## 1 Timothy 3:1-7

*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*

## Titus 1:5-9

*5 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—6 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. 7 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, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9 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.*

## Personal Life

**How did you become a Christian? Please also describe when, where, and why you were baptized.**

I became a Christian at the age of 4 years. I do not know a date, but I do remember it being a Sunday night service standing with Mom and Dad during the invitation given by Brother Parker Dailey at Blue Ridge Baptist Temple. My parents became Christians when I was about 3 months old. Their diligent instruction at home and my regular exposure at church to the simple truths of God, of sin, of Jesus' death, and of eternal life were dramatically real to me. I remember knowing that I was a sinner and wanting to "be saved". Though I did not go forward during the invitation, I prayed with the pastor and repeated the words he said as he invoked the traditional "sinner's prayer" for anyone who wanted to be saved that night.

On our way home from church, I remember telling Mom and Dad that I “got saved at church tonight!” I remember them asking me a lot of questions on the way home trying to verify that I genuinely knew what I had done. I’m not sure if all my answers were perfect, but I knew what I had done. My sins were forgiven because Jesus died on the cross for me and if I died I knew I was going to heaven.

There has not been a time when I took a deeply rebellious step backward in my spiritual maturity. In about the sixth grade I remember occasionally experiencing the fear of being “left behind when the rapture comes”. I went to Mom and Dad’s bedroom late one night, knocked on the door, and expressed my fears to them. We had a long conversation about the permanence of salvation, after which we all prayed and I specifically confirmed before the Lord that I had submitted to Him. During the following summer, I began asking questions about baptism. After conversations with Mom and Dad, and after having met with my pastor, Larry George at Pleasant Grove Bible Church, I was baptized during the beginning of my seventh grade year. Baptism was, for me, a public testimony to my church and those present that I had trusted in Jesus’ completed work for my salvation. It was also an opportunity for me to establish a reassuring landmark in my life for a decision I had made many years prior.

### **What is your educational background?**

I attended Tri-City Christian School for 12 years. After graduation in 1991 I attended Bob Jones University for 4 years with a bachelor’s degree in premed. In 2000 I began attending UMKC School of Dentistry from which I graduated with a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 2004.

### **Describe your current walk with the Lord and how He is sanctifying you and conforming you to the image of Christ. How have you grown in Christian maturity in the past year?**

I am currently learning patience as my faith is being tested. Not necessarily by trial, as some might define a trial, but by simply waiting and allowing God to give direction for me and my family. There are moments and even days when I physically feel the tightness of anxiety in my chest as I desperately struggle with the balance between office, home, and family, all while striving to be mindful of our potential future commitment to missions.

I am a person who prefers to plan details for the future. However, I have learned in the last year, even the last 6 months, the futility of any plans I may have for the future.

Sarah is an essential balance for me, reminding me of God’s plan for us and our need to hold the effects of this world loosely. I am daily challenged to strain forward to what lies ahead: the prize of the upward call of God. The things which I see about me are temporal. Things unseen are eternal.

### **In what ways are you actively sharing the gospel (seeking to share the gospel) and disciple others?**

Gospel conversations in my office with patients are not uncommon, and as opportunities arise I take advantage. Sarah and I also regularly participate in worldwide missions, making both physical and spiritual provision for the needy.

Discipling others is largely an extension of my presence and activity at SWBC. I value fellowship with many members of our assembly, and with time some of those relationships have become regularly timed conversations regarding a specific topic over which that person may be wrestling. Or similarly, my relationship with someone has been focussed on regular exhortation of that individual when they've needed encouragement.

**Describe how you are actively seeking to grow and mature in your walk with Christ (e.g., your approach to the spiritual disciplines of Bible intake, prayer, fellowship, etc.).**

Bible reading, for me, takes place early in the morning. Time management is of necessity lest I allow my busyness to impede my personal interaction with God. Early mornings tend to be less interrupted.

I keep a small personal prayer notebook, and time for prayer is likewise best early in the morning. Or on the way to work in the morning. Or at night before bed. Sarah and I will often pray in the evenings together before we go to sleep.

Admittedly, prayer is the hardest of these activities wherein to maintain consistency. Myriad activities beg my time and attention so as to thwart regular quiet time in prayer. Being intentional is imperative.

Sarah and I are deliberate in our fellowship as well. We have purposed to open our house to others for fellowship as often as a weekend allows. We also get together with some outside our home on occasion for fellowship. Most recently I have enjoyed the small group of men I engage with on Wednesday nights.

**What is your personal belief and practice regarding giving and financial stewardship?**

I believe that every believer should seek to identify himself with a local church. And while there is perhaps some room for interpretation of the former statement, there is little need for interpretation of the following: I believe that every believer should financially support the church that he regularly attends. How much and how regularly are not defined in Scripture, but are to be determined by the individual. And therein lies the importance of the depth of a man's relationship with the Lord as related to giving. Giving is ultimately a heart issue. As a man's spiritual walk improves, the less he is enamored by the world, the more hilarious and generous will be his giving.

I believe that giving should first be dedicated to the local church. Giving to para-church organizations or other special interests are not wrong, but they should not be primary destinations for your giving.

I believe giving should be sacrificial. If giving doesn't hurt, you're not giving.

Sarah and I make monthly offerings to SWBC. Those offerings are more than 10% of our monthly income. In addition, we also give annually to Rachel House, and we provide monthly support to a missionary friend of ours through Pleasant Grove Bible Church.

**Who are the spiritual leaders in your life (past or present) who have or do shape you?**

The first and most influential spiritual leaders I have had in life are my parents. Sovereign providence saved them while I was still very young, and I had the privilege of being raised in a godly home where I was shaped by their wisdom and example.

Though I cannot completely agree doctrinally with Jan Milton, it was the hours of conversation and my years of experience with him and Operation Renewed Hope that fed my appetite for missions and still, in part, shape my approach to global missions today.

Ben Awbrey's "you can't do it wrong" approach to evangelism was refreshing to me, and gave me boldness to engage people with the gospel despite my frequent feelings of inadequacy. Also, his confident approach to teaching on election revolutionized my understanding of Grace, and gave me an intense desire to personally delve into Scripture to learn more.

Conversations with Bret and Kelly Capranica and their suggestions and books on marriage and parenting have been instructive to both me and my wife. Pastor Bret is also a present portrait of patience and confident humility, and I covet his depth of Scriptural knowledge and capable ability to teach.

**Have you ever discipled anyone? If so, who, how long and describe what that discipling relationship looked like.**

There have been three specific examples wherein I have counseled individuals at SWBC. With all three men I met semi-regularly over the course of six months to a year to discuss specific issues with each of them. My intent for these men was to encourage them in their faithfulness to their spouses and family, deepen their dedication to God, and improve their personal commitment to intentional accountability.

With the other, I met on Saturday mornings for breakfast for a number of months, encouraging him in his new walk with Christ, and offering correction and counsel as was needed.

**What are your long-term plans as far as living in this area?**

As has been indicated to the elders a short time ago, we are in constant prayer about a more consistent involvement in ministry at some location abroad, perhaps the Middle East. There will likely be a time when we will not be living in this area, and yet there may be a more distant future time when we may return to the area to live.

## **Family Life**

**How did your wife become a Christian and when, where, and why was she baptized?**

Sarah, similar to me, was raised in a Christian home from infancy and remembers "being saved" at the age of 4 years. She was also baptized shortly thereafter at First Baptist of Pine Hills in Orlando, Florida, because she was taught that baptism was naturally the next step after salvation. During high school, she confirmed her commitment to Christ with greater understanding and dedication and was baptized again at Calvary Baptist Church in Winter Garden, Florida.

Sarah has also experienced the Lord's discipline in a marked way. During her college years and shortly thereafter, she made choices that cost her much peace, many years, and her first



husband. It was his death that God used to get her attention, and through the experience He has yielded the “peaceful fruit of righteousness”.

**How did you meet your wife and how long have you been married?**

In the spring of 2010, Sarah and I first met on a missions trip in Uganda shortly after she lost her first husband. While I was interested in knowing her better at that time, she was still grieving her loss. We lost contact for a year and a half until late November 2011 when I met her again in Paris on my way to India for another missions trip. During the following week we found opportunities to have conversation. When we returned home in December the conversations continued by phone and she came to Kansas City for a visit late that month. We were engaged the following month in January, 2012, and we were married in June of the same year. We have been married for two years.

**How has she expressed her support of your desire to serve as an elder?**

Sarah and I have been conversing and praying about eldership for the past several months. She has expressed her support through her prayers and contributions to this questionnaire.

**Who are your children and how old are each of them?**

Brogan 1

**List some specific ways you lead your family.**

In the secular realm, I lead in the way of finances, home care, and some of our recreational activities. I pray regularly with Sarah, most often at night before bed. I also pray with Brogan and Sarah as he’s getting ready for bed, and after we have read our almost-nightly devotions. We pray before each meal. We also prepare for Sunday mornings by reading through the church’s “Preparing for Sunday” web-posts on Saturday evenings.

**How would you describe your overall approach to parenting? What is the biggest challenge you have faced as a parent?**

Our approach to parenting might best be described as “lovingly authoritative,” with the intent of instilling self discipline and a love for God. We have attempted to make our approach to parenting a biblical one, and though Brogan is still very young we regularly expose him to prayer, conversation about Jesus, who God is, hymn singing, and Bible reading. We have also sought the counsel of others whose parenting is consistent with the biblical model we are seeking to emulate.

**From your present perspective, how would serving as an elder impact your family?**

I think that our preferences and convictions-driven lifestyle will be minimally affected. As far as how we currently attend church and intentionally engage in fellowship, I think there would be little impact as we are already quite committed.

There would likely be a more regular or significant weekly time commitment due to meetings, etc. of which we are both aware.

## Doctrinal Life

*Please explain what you believe the Bible teaches about the following:*

### **The Bible (inerrancy, inspiration, sufficiency, authority, what is the canon)**

Every word and concept in Scripture is true, inerrant, and God-breathed, both the original autographs and the Bible we have today (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

All of God's words that He intended for us to have, and that are necessary for us to have, for salvation and spiritual maturity are faithfully preserved in the Bible (Proverbs 30:5,6; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; James 1:18; 2 Peter 1:3).

Because the Bible is the very Word of God and is inerrant, it is the final authority for truth. Any other source of "truth" is errant if it conflicts with the Bible (Psalm 119:160, John 17:17, Ephesians 1:13-14).

I believe that the collection of the 66 books of the Bible we call the "Canon" is complete and that there is nothing that can or should be added to it or taken away (Revelation 22:18,19). Internal and external evidence testify to its integrity. Any addition to or subtraction from the Bible through private or public revelation is met with Divine judgement.

### **God the Father**

The infallible, infinite God is the sovereign creator of everything in the universe (John 1:1,2). He created time and His existence spans eternity past and future. God reveals Himself to man through both special and general revelation, and knowledge of Him is required for salvation (John 1:9; Hebrews 1:1,2; Romans 1:20). He is the one and only God existing within the unity of three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30,33; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Romans 8:9; John 14:16-18).

### **Jesus Christ**

Jesus is God's sinless Son. His incarnation through virgin birth in no way lessened His Deity (Matthew 1:23, Colossians 2:9, Philippians 2:57). His death was required for the penalty of our sins, and belief in Jesus' finished work of atonement physical death, burial, bodily resurrection are required for salvation (John 1:12,13, Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 1:18-21). Jesus Christ is our Advocate before God the Father (1 John 2:1). Jesus was and is God, and He will one day return as King of kings and Lord of lords to eternally rule heaven and earth (John 1:1-2,14:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,18; Revelation 19:11-21).

### **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is God, sent as Comforter to indwell believers (John 14:15-17). If the Spirit is in us, Christ also dwells within us (Romans 8:9-11) and He gives us life and identifies us with Himself. Similarly, when we are indwelt by the Spirit, God Himself dwells inside us (1 Corinthians 3:16).

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and causes us to conform to His likeness (John 15:8,11; Galatians 5:16,17). Within the believer, He enables us to understand God's revelation to us

through Scripture (Ephesians 1:17,18; I Corinthians 2:10-13). The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in prayer (Romans 8:26).

### **The Trinity**

God is one God, yet each of the three persons in the Godhead is a distinct person. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all mentioned both separately and working together in Scripture (Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19), and all three persons of the trinity are equated with God (Genesis 1:1, John 1:1).

### **Mankind and his sinful nature**

Sin originated with Adam in the garden (Genesis 3, Romans 5:12). Because of his sin every human nature is fallen total depravity and we are without ability of ourselves to achieve holiness (Romans 3:21-25, John 1:13, Ephesians 2:10).

### **The Gospel**

The word "gospel" literally means "good news". Man once had perfect fellowship with God, yet our sin separated our relationship with Him. The good news is this: that though we once were dead in our sins, God, in His mercy, made us alive in Christ by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:1-10). The consequence of our sin is death, but God's free gift is eternal life through belief in Jesus (Romans 6:23). Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved...! (Acts 16:31, John 3:16).

### **Salvation (how is a person saved)**

Salvation first demands an understanding that sin separates us from a holy God. Belief in Jesus Christ as Savior is alone necessary for salvation. Turning from a sinful lifestyle is the first visible evidence of genuine salvation.

Salvation occurs by God's grace through an individual's faith which is sourced only from God (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:13; Romans 3:23,24). Salvation is not because of man's works but by Jesus' finished work on the cross (John 19:30, Galatians 2:16, Titus 3:47). Man's faith is required for salvation (Acts 16:31; Romans 1:16,17; I Peter 1:5). Sorrow for sin and repentance from sin is a natural response to saving faith and conversion (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Once a person is saved, salvation continues as the believer's maturity in Christ deepens, and ends when he is united with Christ in heaven.

### **Justification**

In salvation, justification is the act of God declaring a sinner holy and righteous. Justification is the first part of salvation and occurs the instant a repentant sinner places his faith in Jesus Christ alone as his Savior (Galatians 2:6). We are justified by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Romans 3:24-25).

### **The Atonement**

Having lost our relationship with God, we were “bought back” by God into relationship with Him through the precious blood and death of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:18-19). Atonement is a free gift (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7-10, 2:1-10).

### **Sanctification**

Sanctification is the act of God by which He sets a believer apart for holiness and His purpose. It is the second aspect of salvation, beginning at the time a believer is justified, progressing through the lifetime of the believer, and ending when the believer is wholly separated from evil and united with God in glory (John 17:16-19, I Peter 1:15, I Thessalonians 5:23).

### **Perseverance (eternal security)**

At the moment of justification when the Holy Spirit indwells a believer, he is made eternally secure. A believer cannot lose his salvation (Romans 8:28-39; John 6:37-40, 10:27-30). Jesus founded our faith and He will finish our faith and complete our salvation (Hebrews 12:2, Philippians 1:6).

### **Glorification**

Glorification begins at death for a believer. For those believers who are alive at Christ's return, glorification begins with the reuniting of our Lord with His bride, the church (2 Corinthians 5:8, Revelation 21:24). Glorification is the third aspect, and the final act of God in our salvation wherein we are finally and eternally united with Him and separated from our sinful state forever (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

### **God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility in Salvation**

God, in His sovereignty, predestined some for salvation based on no merit of any single person. It is God's exclusive choice. There is no condition a person can meet at any time to warrant God's choosing. We are chosen by God before creation (Ephesians 1:36). We are born by the will of God, not by any will of our own (John 1:13). Salvation is reserved for those whom God loved, foreknew, elected, and predestined (Romans 8:28-30).

The Bible gives ample evidence for man's culpability. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23). God has revealed Himself to men through creation. His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived since the beginning of time (Romans 1:19,20). Yet man rejects God. None is righteous, no one seeks for God, all have sinned (Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:10-18). Mankind is without excuse.

Belief in Jesus Christ as Savior is necessary for any person's salvation. Faith and repentance are simultaneous requirements (Mark 16:16; John 3:15,16) All men are called to repent (Acts 17:30,31).

But not all men believe and repent. Their minds are blinded from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3,4). Though they are called to repent, they do not, because they cannot do so without the enabling of the Holy Spirit (John 6:36,44,60-65). Man will not and cannot exhibit faith in Christ. Man cannot repent from sins unless God Himself intercedes and grants the ability to do so.

The very God who said, “let there be light” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6). God is rich in mercy, and He alone made us alive together with Christ. It is by grace we are saved. By grace through a faith not our own, it too is the gift of God! We are His workmanship alone (John 1:13, Ephesians 2:8-10).

Why did God, who knew that no one would naturally choose submission to Him, who knew that no one could measure up to His standard, still unconditionally elect a few on whom to confer mercy? I don't know! Why did He choose me? I have no answer for that. The best word to describe this baffling principle is “grace”. Grace. Undeserved. Given freely. Given before we even wanted it. But now we are desperate for it. God's grace alone saves us. I don't know why, and I cannot equate man's responsibility to believe with God's sovereignty. I certainly did nothing to warrant grace. I was ordained to be born in modern day America to parents who'd similarly been chosen by grace. I heard the name of Jesus, learned of my guilt, and exhibited faith. Why? Grace.

By Sovereign grace we are saved! And for that I am desperately and eternally indebted and thankful to none other than God (Romans 8:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:13). Abject humility should be our response when considering God's sovereign election.

## **Last Things**

I personally believe that there will be a seven year tribulation, prior to which the church will be “raptured” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We are to comfort each other with knowing that Christ will return. Following the tribulation, there will be a one thousand year reign of Christ on earth. Thereafter, Satan will be finally defeated and cast into the lake of fire, unbelievers will be judged, and believers will dwell eternally in the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem (Revelation 19:22).

## **The Scriptures**

The Bible, or Scripture, is God's word. It is inspired in that God divinely influenced men to write the very words of God (2 Peter 1:21). No part of God's word will ever be altered or lost. God Himself preserves its integrity (Matthew 5:17,18).

## **The Church**

The church is the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22,23). The church is comprised of believers or “elect” individuals from the time of Pentecost until Jesus returns for His bride. The church may refer to the larger, universal body of believers, but in Scripture it most often refers to a local body of believers.

## **Baptism**

Baptism is a public act of obedience to Scripture's command to “repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38, Matthew 28:19,20). Baptism is limited only to believers who desire to identify with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It is a symbolic act, necessitating complete water immersion (Romans 6:3,4). Baptism is not required for salvation. It is a public declaration of faith.

## **The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's supper is described in all four gospels wherein Jesus describes the bread as His body to be broken, and the wine as His blood to be spilled (Matthew 26:26-29). The Lord's supper, like baptism, is similarly a symbolic privilege and an act of obedience. Its purpose is to memorialize Jesus' death (I Corinthians 11:23-32), and it publicly identifies one as a believer in the sufficiency of Christ's blood atoning for sin.

### **Gender Roles (within the family and within the church)**

God created both man and woman in His image, and He gave woman to man to be his helper (Genesis 1:27, 2:18). With the curse came man's sinful tendency to distort God's original plan and assignment.

In the New Testament, God clearly establishes roles for both genders in the home that should be representative of all believers. The husband is the head of the home. He is to love his wife sacrificially, nurture her, and keep her pure as Christ does his own bride, the church. The wife's role is to submit to her husband as each of us submits to Christ as the head of the church, to be self-controlled, kind, and to love her husband and children (Ephesians 5:22-33, Titus 2:18, I Timothy 2:8-15).

Within the church, men are to be the elders or shepherds of the church (I Timothy 3:17, Titus 1:59). Both lists of qualifications are for men. Men are to bear the responsibility for shepherding and spiritual leadership in the church. Women are not to "exercise authority over a man" and therefore her serving in a shepherd/teacher role is prohibited (I Timothy 2:11,12). Women are, however, allowed, even encouraged to teach other women in the church "what is good", being "reverent", training younger women to "love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled" (Titus 2:3;5).

It is not to be overlooked that both genders are given the responsibility of being "imitators of God, as beloved children. And [to] walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us", and we are encouraged to submit "to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:1,21).

The world mocks and defies these well defined principles which should be characteristic of all men and women. In turn, the breakdown of the family unit, the failing integrity of the home, and the general decay of morality in society is observed.

### **The Lordship Salvation Issue**

When someone places their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they are simultaneously naming Jesus Christ as their Lord. Salvation cannot take place until a person understands his sinful condition, and his position before a Holy God. One who knows his wretched state and confesses his sins and need for a Savior at the same time repents of his sins, turns from his lifestyle, and makes Christ his Lord. The Lordship Salvation issue is an issue of repentance.

A believer in Jesus Christ as his Savior intrinsically makes Jesus Christ his Master. All are inseparably associated: faith and repentance, Savior and Lord.

Paul called for both repentance and for faith in his missionary appeal: "...repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). The writer of Hebrews also advocated "...repentance from dead works and of faith toward God..." (Hebrews 6:1).

Other passages make plain the responsibility of a believer to obediently follow Christ as his Lord. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:16). "By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked" (1 John 2:5,6). It is imperative that a believer's lifestyle reflect submission to Christ as Lord. "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17).

## **Divorce and Remarriage**

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:15,16). His original intent from the time of creation was that a man leave his former relationships and be joined to his wife in an inseparable union (Genesis 2:24). Even the New Testament compares the bond a man has to his wife as that of Christ to the church (Ephesians 5:25); a bond never to be broken.

Jesus, when asked of the Jews His position on divorce similarly taught that God's original intent was that divorce should never occur and that no man should separate the bond. It was because of the sinfulness of their hearts and the Jew's insistence on divorce that Moses required them to give a certificate of divorce making the separation legally official. "But from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:59).

The only clear allowance for divorce and remarriage is when an unbelieving spouse leaves a believing spouse. But, the believer should never be the partner that breaks the marriage. In fact, if the unbeliever is content to remain in the marriage, the believing partner should remain married to the unbeliever. But if the unbelieving partner in a marriage should choose to leave, the believer is allowed to let that partner go for the sake of keeping peace. The believer is then allowed to remarry "In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved" (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

In the New Testament Jesus does give allowance for divorce in the case of adultery. It does not, however, require or even recommend divorce for adultery, and the principle that Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 7 should be followed by any believer.

I believe that Jesus, Paul, and the entirety of New Testament teach forgiveness, restoration, and grace to all believers. Any marital conflict between believers requiring intervention should follow the principles of church discipline which aims for restoration. During the process of church discipline, it may be discovered that one or another of the marital partners is not a believer. In that case, repentance for the one may lead to salvation, or the principles from 1 Corinthians 7 may become necessary to be applied.

## **Sanctity of Life**

Man was created in God's image (Genesis 1:26,27). Therefore, taking a man's life is declared punishable by God (Genesis 9:6). God knew us before we were born and formed us in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16). Life is sacred regardless of its size, level of development, environment, or degree of dependency.

## **Church Discipline**

Because the local church is representative of Christ's body, it is imperative that purity in the body be maintained. If a member of the body is practicing a lifestyle of sin, and is unrepentant even when confronted in the properly prescribed manner, the church should publicly separate from that individual (Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 5:1-13).

The goal of church discipline is always restoration.

## Cultural Life

### **Where do you work and for how long have you worked there?**

I am a God-ordained dentist in Platte City, MO. I have been self employed as a dentist since 2004. I have been in Platte City since 2007

### **Describe your relationships with your immediate neighbors?**

In the last year, I have met only a couple of my neighbors: two individuals up the street from me. I have since had a few brief interactions with one, but have had more extensive conversations with another, in particular about our missions trips and intentions for the future. She watches the house while we're out of town, and Sarah has her number in case she needs something while I'm away.

## Ministry Life

### **Why do you want to be an elder?**

I believe that as a member of the body, my local church, I am required to serve that local body in whatever way I see there is a need and wherein I am able. I also believe that, if called upon by church leadership to serve that body in some way, it should be with great consideration and very thoughtful reasoning that I would decline that invitation.

I also have a desire to serve. As Sarah and I have prayed about eldership, my desire to serve has grown. I would also greatly enjoy the regular fellowship with other godly servants on the elder board.

The elders have expressed a need to me. I desire to serve my local church and have appreciated the privilege of serving in various capacities heretofore. "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task" (I Timothy 3:1). If the office of elder is considered a "noble task", and if God has presented this to me as an opportunity to serve, then I must follow through with the process of pursuing whatever end He has for me.

Serving the body in any way is an extreme privilege. Merely undertaking the process of becoming an elder has been a spiritually maturing and humbling exercise. Serving as an elder would stretch me, but if the Lord would to use the position as a means of my sanctification, I cannot decline the opportunity.



**What is your understanding of the primary roles and responsibilities of an Elder as defined by Scripture?**

Qualifications for elders are well delineated in both I Timothy and Titus. An elder is a shepherd, or overseer of the church. He is a leader of the church in both word and example, and there are illustrations of his activities sprinkled throughout the New Testament. These are also well outlined in the SWBC Bylaws.

Among the activities that an elder must be capable of performing is that of teacher. In both passages cited above, an elder is described as one who is “able to teach” or “give instruction”, particularly in sound doctrine as he “holds firm to the trustworthy word”. He is also adept at discerning false doctrine and able to rebuke false teachers.

Humility is the exhortation to elders I find in I Peter 5. “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly... not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock... Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

The position of an elder is far less a status than it is a highly esteemed responsibility performed in humility (I Thessalonians 5:13).

**How are you currently fulfilling these responsibilities in the different contexts in which God has sovereignly placed you?**

I believe I am capable of teaching and equipping other believers through personal exhortation and discipleship, as well as in a classroom setting. I believe I am also capable of serving in a leadership role, a position I am currently filling on the finance committee. I do pray for, and with, the leadership of the church and other members of the body. And it is always my intent and that of Sarah’s to be examples to others in our church: in our service and attendance, in the way we initiate fellowship, and in the way we worship.

**Have you read the SWBC Church Covenant, and do you fully affirm all that it contains?**

I have read the SWBC Covenant and fully affirm all that it contains.

**Have you read the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), and do you fully affirm all that it contains?**

I have read the Baptist Faith and Message and, to the best of my knowledge, I fully affirm all that it contains.

**Have you read the by-laws of SWBC, and do you fully support all that they contain?**

I have read the SWBC by-laws and, to the best of my knowledge, I fully support them.

**Describe how you would handle a situation in which you were on the minority side of an issue being decided by the Elders and you had strong convictions about your position.**

Given a strong conviction on a position that might oppose the majority, I would first seek answers to a number of questions that might help me understand the reasoning behind the majority decision. With a teachable spirit and a humble attempt to learn, I might find that my conviction is, rather, a preference on which I could compromise.

If, however, my conviction remains unchanged, and unanimity is a requirement for the decision, and no sense of compromise is detected, recusing myself from the Elder board might become necessary.

**When you have been met with opposition, has it been mostly related to your style of leadership, your personality, your beliefs, or something else? Please explain.**

The most noticeable and consistent position of leadership I have held has been within my own office. When I have experienced opposition, it has most often been regarding a matter of my beliefs or of a position to which I hold. I am strongly principled in how I practice and my principles extend to my lifestyle outside of work as well. Notwithstanding, my tendency to see matters in “black and white” and my pragmatic, direct approach to some issues has caused me to recognize my need to communicate more gently. Grace and loving communication are the key. I know that from the time I began practicing ten years ago until today, I have had to learn a more patient, gracious manner of leading. Though I am far from perfect, the humbling process of learning to lead with grace has produced a generally cheerful and orderly work environment for me and my employees. I pray daily for wisdom and patience.

**What ministries at SWBC have you been involved in?**

When I began attending Summit Woods in 2005, I began faithfully attending the Wednesday night Bible study. A request was made about a year later for help with the children's ministry on Wednesday evenings and I began working with Stacy McCommon in Cubbies.

I began singing with the choir ministry shortly after attending SWBC.

I served on the Personnel Committee.

I have taught during Equipping Class time.

I was a small group leader.

I currently serve on the Finance Committee.

I do nursery duty once a month.

**Describe your involvement in the previous two churches you have been a part of (name the churches, how did you serve, and why did you leave)?**

From the time of 3 months of age to 6 years I attended Blue Ridge Baptist Temple.

In 1979 we moved to Blue Springs and began attending Pleasant Grove Bible Church in Kansas City, MO. I was taught to serve in the church beginning at a very young age: helping to take up the offering, playing and singing for special music and in choir, working in Vacation Bible School and AWANA, nursing home ministry, and finally as music leader. There was rarely a time from late elementary to after college when I wasn't serving the church in some small but meaningful way.

I attended PGBC from 1979 to 2005 at which time I began attending SWBC. Leaving Pleasant Grove was a very difficult decision. I had attended the church since before I could remember. Yet I desired a peer group with whom I could fellowship, and I needed a place where my spiritual growth could be both improved and challenged. I was experiencing neither at PGBC.

I met with the board of elders/deacons one evening and informed them of my desire to leave. I also assured them that there were no serious doctrinal issues with which I had difficulty, only that I desired to find a place where I could satisfy these yearnings.

Never having attended another church, I was surprised at some that I visited, even dismayed, but was ultimately very pleased with both the teaching at SWBC and the fellowship. I particularly enjoyed the men's fellowship on Wednesday evenings and our occasional Sunday School fellowships.

**Describe any previous teaching experiences you have had at other churches?**

I have not had previous experiences teaching, per se, at other churches. Todd Arnold and I did alternate teaching duties during Thursday night Bible studies held at his house for a couple of years. I am also called upon to train college age nurses and young people in a "boot camp" environment for the purpose of preparing them for missions trip ministries with Operation Renewed Hope. I have been performing in this capacity for about the last 7 years. Otherwise, my teaching experiences limited to church settings are only those with SWBC.

**How would you describe the difference between biblical convictions and personal preferences? How should elders resolve differences they have on issues of ministry application?**

Standards which define our lifestyle are driven by both our preferences and our convictions. In my opinion, preferences and convictions may differ in two ways: origin, and degree of adherence.

Convictions are derived from and supported by Scripture. A conviction will not be compromised even in the face of danger to that individual's life or social position. It would be a sin for that individual to compromise his convictions.

A preference may also be Scripturally based, but it may just as well be based in tradition, convenience, or mere habit. A preference may also be compromised, if necessary, for the sake of the pursuit of peace among the brethren (Romans 14:19).

Preferences, and even convictions, may change as a believer matures in his spiritual walk and understanding of Scripture. If within an acting entity of fellow believers an individual finds himself at odds with the otherwise general consensus, it is important to evaluate whether the contention is over a matter of preference or conviction. Approach discussion of the issue with humility. If the contention is regarding a preference, deference to the majority is indicated.

If contention over a matter regards a conviction, a humble approach to discussion with the group should be made. There may be room for a more mature understanding of Scripture. In an extreme case, if every possible appeal has been made, if instruction has been pursued and contention over a true conviction still remains, separation from that entity may be required by that individual. If an elder consistently finds himself at odds with other elders over Scripturally based convictions, it may be best for that one to identify himself with another ministry altogether.

From the perspective of the group, however, if even a sole member of the entity has a conviction regarding a decision, and if in compromising that conviction it would cause that

one to sin, it would be right for the larger majority to defer to the one for the sake of that individual's conscience.

# Affirmation Timeline

Sunday, October 19	Announcement to the Church.
Sunday, November 2, 9, 16, 23	Adam will be available in the Fellowship Hall after Equipping Classes from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for dialogue.  Adam will deliver the mid-service prayer and read Scripture during our main worship gathering.  Adam will be available for dialogue at the Welcome Table after the main worship gathering.
Sunday, November 23	Adam will give his testimony, preach, and conduct a Q&A session beginning at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 14	Congregational vote to affirm Adam (at the conclusion of our main worship gathering)

## From Our By-Laws

### III. Members of the Board of Elders

While no specific number is mentioned, the Biblical mandate is for a plurality of Elders to Elder/lead the local church. An Elder candidate must be a church member for at least one year with the exception of the Pastor-Teacher and Associate Pastor(s).

The Elder Board shall consist of the Pastor-Teacher, the Associate Pastor(s), and other qualified men as affirmed by the church body. At least one member of the Elder Board must be a lay elder.

### IV. Length of Service

Each Elder, with the exception of the Pastor-Teacher and the Associate Pastor(s), is appointed for a 3-year term. At the end of the 3-year term, the Elder can be re-appointed to another 3-year term.

After two consecutive 3-year terms, the Elder must take a year off from serving on the Elder Board before he can be considered for another 3-year term.

### VII. Nomination and Appointment of Elders

This process should follow three steps:

The candidate should express his desire and willingness to serve to the Elders. A church member may also recommend a candidate to the Elders.

The candidate is examined and trained by the Elder Examination Board and recommended to the church by the Elders.

The candidate is affirmed and ordained by the congregation, thereby becoming a member of the Elder Board.