



BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP RESOURCES

Passing the Baton of Leadership From One Generation to the Next

Regional Teams

Memorandum of Understanding v2.1

I. Our Mission

To see a well-functioning biblical model of eldership in widespread use in churches around the world.

The Lord Jesus' marching order for the Church was to *"Go ... make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you..."* (Matt. 28:19–20). This discipleship begins at the top with the leaders functioning in the way God *"commanded you."* When church leaders follow biblical teachings, particularly in regard to church structure and leadership, then the stage is set for all believers to learn discipleship by *"observing all that our Lord has commanded"* us.

Elders, when biblically qualified and functioning in God's way, provide a model for Christian maturity, which is the goal of discipleship. Thus the emphasis on promoting biblical eldership (BE) is an effort to bring the church back to its original paradigm for discipleship. By implementing BE, churches will see a radical transformation in the way they practice discipleship.

Watch the video overview of the Biblical Eldership Resource (BER) ministry found at:

<https://www.biblicaleldership.com/about-us/ber-mission/>

II. Our Goal

We endeavor to set up regional teams and representatives throughout the world who will promote the practice of biblical eldership in their respective regions, in conjunction with BER. The BER core team has developed a strategy and resources for teaching and training for eldership. The regional teams will implement this strategy using the BER resource as appropriate for the respective regions, adapting for language and culture as needed. In some cases, this may mean a complete translation of the resources into non-English languages.

III. Operational Agreement

A. Need for Agreement

Because of the crucial nature of this ministry to the life and unity of God's church worldwide, it is required that those who join in this effort both understand and agree with our BER principles and practices. This document will serve to inform you of the convictions, commitments and priorities of BER, and the regional team responsibilities.

B. The BER Core Team

1. Description

- The core team operates under the auspices of “Church Revitalization and Reform,” a non-profit (501c3) corporation incorporated in the USA.
- This team originated the vision for BER and developed the strategy, core ministry tools and materials, including the Internet website www.BiblicalEldership.com.
- This team provides guidance and oversight for the worldwide expansion of the BER ministry.
- The team functions like a council of elders, emulating principles espoused in this ministry.

2. The BER core team commits to providing the following to each regional team:

- “Certification” or “authorization” to represent the ministry of BER and use the resources and tools with the BER core team’s blessing.
- All BER materials and expertise (including HD copies of media) at no cost.
- Technical support where needed/advisable.
- Counsel, encouragement and communication in support for all efforts.
- Coordination of the various teams for mutual encouragement and stimulation.
- Startup resources, samples, graphics and brochures as needed.

C. Regional Teams

1. Description

- A regional team operates independently within its own focus area, under the authority of Jesus Christ.
- A regional team (and all its associates) agrees with and commits to this Memorandum of Understanding, including the doctrinal statement and Principles of Eldership, as outlined below.
- A team functions like a council of elders, emulating as much as possible the principles espoused in this ministry.
- A team is to function in accordance with and promote faithfully the principles of BER.

2. The regional teams commit to the following:

- Recruiting their own team members in accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Developing their own strategy for promoting BER in their focus areas.
- Developing their own funding strategy and procuring necessary resources for their ministry.
- Providing yearly reports to the core team of the progress made.
- Where a non-English site is developed:
 - Using, translating and/or contextualizing the BER materials, as appropriate, for the various language and/or culture groups.
 - Translating the BER resources faithfully without changing the substance or meaning of the biblical teaching. Of course, change of illustrations and contextualization is permitted.
 - Creating original materials to supplement or replace existing materials (written, video or audio) as appropriate for their respective contexts and consistent with the BER principles.
 - Developing/modifying the technical tools appropriate to the specific contexts.
 - Making available to all other BER teams any and all original materials developed, at no cost, for use in the wider BER ministry, with the understanding that no materials may be replicated for profit without permission of the originating core team.

IV. Initial Start-Up

- A. The regional effort begins with a prospective organizing individual who catches the vision of BER and desires to take the lead in expanding BER into their geographic area. This organizing individual will recruit others to join him to form the regional team.
- B. The prospective organizing individual for a region will fill out a BER Regional Team application form and sign this Memorandum of Understanding (see below).
- C. The core team will provide “Best Practices” information for start-up efforts and work.

V. Ongoing Relationship

- A. The duration or term of service for regional teams is indefinite in nature.
- B. The relationship between the BER core team and regional team will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis with a view to reaffirming or adjusting the relationship as appropriate.
- C. The goal is *not* to develop a monolithic ministry that all flows from the core team, but to encourage a distributive network of teams promoting BE principles and working in collaboration with one another where appropriate.
- D. This relationship will be terminated if the team/representative diverts from this Memorandum of Understanding (including the BER Doctrinal Statement and Principles of Biblical Eldership). In such a case, the regional team/associate will cease to function as a BER representative and will stop using the BER materials.

VI. Financial Considerations

- A. BER is a faith-based ministry and looks to the Lord for financial support.
- B. Each regional team will determine and implement its own strategy and sources for funding.
- C. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, no financial obligation is made or implied in this documented arrangement, either on the part of the BER to the regional teams or the regional teams to BER.
- D. No materials provided by the BER core team may be sold without prior permission. Translated resources of BER materials may be sold at the regional team’s discretion, with the provision that 10% *of the profit* will be returned to the BER core team.

VII. Practical Considerations

- A. Each regional group will function independently without any legal arrangement made or implied, either in connection with other BER regional teams or with the BER core team.
- B. Should incorporation as a legal entity be advised for the regional team strategy, that will be undertaken solely at the discretion of the regional team, with no legal accountability to the core team and no liability assumed by or for the core team.

BER Doctrinal Statement

God

There is one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect, holy, eternally existent in three co-equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, God is gracious, merciful, compassionate, abounding in steadfast love and is the righteous Judge of all people. [Gen. 1:1; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 9:7-8; 18:30; 25:10; 86:15; 103:8; 119:156; Is. 6:3; Matt. 28:19; John 1:1-3; 15:26; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:16; 2:19; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:14]

Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is sinlessly perfect. He died sacrificially as our substitute, suffering God's punishment for our sin. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended to his Father's right hand, where he now ministers as our Great High Priest. [Luke 1:26-35; Rom. 5:19; 1 Cor. 15:1-19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 3:16; 24:39; Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Peter 2:22, 24; 1 John 2:1; 3:5]

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is personal and fully God, possessing all the distinctively divine attributes. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. At conversion he:

- Baptizes (joins) the believer into the body of Christ
- Indwells him personally and permanently
- Seals him, guaranteeing his eternal security
- Sets him apart for and enables him to live a holy life
- Endows him with spiritual abilities (i.e., gifts), which benefit the church

[Rom. 8:9; 11, 1 Cor. 12:6-13; 28-31; 6:19; Gal. 5:15, 22-23, Eph. 1:13-14; 2:20; 4:30]

Bible

The Bible (Old & New Testaments) is verbally inspired by God and without error in the original documents. It is entirely reliable and is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The grand theme of Scripture (the written Word) is God's glory revealed through Jesus Christ (the Living Word). [Luke 24:27; John 1:1,14; 5:39; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21]

Mankind

Mankind was created by God in his image, and as such, has the capacity for fellowship with God. Mankind, though, has rebelled and is sinful by nature and practice. The result of this condition is separation from God that leaves mankind deserving a lost eternity in hell. [Gen. 1:27; 2:16-17; Ps. 51:5; Is. 53:6; 59:2; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23; 5:12]

Salvation

Humankind needs to be saved from the consequence of sin and restored into a living relationship with God, which is impossible for a person to accomplish by works or religious observances. Salvation, rather, is accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ and is viewed as a gift of God by grace. Any person who, in faith, acknowledges his or her sinful condition and trusts in Christ's finished work is, at the moment of conversion:

- Forgiven and saved from the consequences of sin and brought into relationship with God (eternal life)
- Made secure in this salvation and relationship forever

[Job 3:3, 16, 36; 5:24; 10:27-29; Rom. 3:28; 10:9-10, 13; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Heb. 9:11-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19]

The Church

The universal Church is not an *organization* but a living *organism* known as the body of Christ. It is composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, regardless of where they meet. The local church is a gathering of believers in a locality who meet in corporate testimony to the Lordship of Christ and to the oneness of the body of Christ. They gather for fellowship, teaching of God's Word, worship and prayer. They also evangelize those who are outside of Christ with a view to making new disciples. Government and discipline are the responsibility of the local church. [Matt. 28:18-20; 18:15-17; John 4:23; 17:21; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 5:1-6:4; 11:23-26; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:11-16; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18]

There are two very particular commands that Christ left the Church to practice throughout the years: baptism and the Lord's Supper. [Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:12, 35-39; Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:12, Matt 26:26-29; Luke 22:15-22; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-26]

Principles of Biblical Eldership

We believe the Bible teaches that a team of biblically qualified elders is to lead the local church, men who are equal in authority, serving as under-shepherds to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Plurality

God's Word speaks of elders in the plural who share in the overall governance of the church.

Shared

Although elders may function differently according to their gifting, all are needed to provide overall responsibility and authority to lead the church.

Biblically Qualified

Scripture lays out explicit teaching on elder qualification (or characteristics) for those who shepherd the local church.

Male Leadership

Elders are to be males, as taught in Scripture. While women may serve in many roles in the church, God has ordained that men, and not women, are to serve in the overall governing and teaching roles.

The Office

The office of elder is to be distinguished from the spiritual gift of pastor or pastor-teacher (which an elder may or may not have). Any who serve with the gift of pastor or pastor-teacher do so under the authority of the elders. Further, the office of elder is to be distinguished also from the office of deacon.

Vocational Elder

The elder who rules, teaches or preaches well is worthy of financial support, or "double honor" (see 1 Tim. 5:17-18), so that he may serve the church more fully. Such an individual serves under the authority of the elders as a whole and does not supplant but supplements the elders' pastoral ministry.

Terminology

The biblical terms "elder," "overseer" and "bishop" and the contemporary terms "shepherd-elder" and "pastor-elder" all refer to the same individuals.

NOTE: For the biblical basis supporting this statement, check out our brief booklet at <https://www.biblicaleldership.com/what-biblical-eldership-0/booklet/>.

Memorandum of Understanding v1.0

Commitment Form

Prospective Regional Representative (please print)

Name: _____

Region: _____ (state, country, region or continent)

I have read and agree to this “Memorandum of Understanding,” including the doctrinal statement and the Principles of Biblical Eldership outlined in this memorandum.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

BER Core Team member (please print):

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____