

Church Handbook

Policies and Practices



Christ Church Tygerberg

Proclaiming God's Word. Preparing God's People.
Prompted by love. Persevering in love.

CCT Handbook

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A. WHO WE ARE

We are a church committed to getting to know God better, learning from the Bible, loving each other, and introducing our families and greater community to Jesus. You are very welcome to join us, whether you are investigating the claims of Christ or whether you are already a Christian and looking for a church family.

Christ Church Tygerberg is part of the denomination REACH SA (*Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa*, www.reachsa.org.za). REACH-SA was previously known as *The Church of England in South Africa* (C.E.S.A).

We are convinced that the Bible is God's inspired, true, and powerful message and that Jesus, God's Son, is the only way to God.

B. OUR VISION, SHARED OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

What is a vision?

A vision is an organisation's (in our case, a church's) guiding beacon. It zooms out to give perspective on the overarching reason for your organisation's existence. Rather than articulating the specifics, the vision describes how your organisation seeks to impact and improve the world around it. We believe our vision encapsulates what God's Word calls us to as a church.



What are shared objectives?

Our shared objectives assist every member of our church in understanding the what we will do, together, in working towards achieving our vision.



What are values?

Values are the fundamental beliefs that govern our lives. They influence how we act and speak. They guide our decisions. They embody the person we want to be, influencing how we treat others and how we interact with the world. To state it plainly, values are the core of who we are.

In early 2023, our church decided on **seven core values** that will inform how we do life and ministry.





Love

In order to model Christ's sacrificial love, we put the needs of others first by showing patience and kindness.

(John 13:35)



Service

We are members of Christ's body made up of many different parts and each having a vital role to play, therefore we serve each other as Christ served us.

(Matthew 20:28,
1 Corinthians 12:12)



Integrity

We seek to imitate Christ's supreme example of integrity, uphold the truth even in the face of adversity, be honest, and always do what we say we will do.

(Proverbs 10:9)



Missional

We are committed to bringing in Christ's lost sheep. Through word, deed, prayer and financial support we endeavour to share the gospel in our suburb and across the world. This will often mean using creative ideas and practical service.

(John 10:16)



Intentional

In every situation we are purposeful ambassadors for Christ in thought, word and deed.

(2 Corinthians 5:20)



Unity in diversity

We value people from all backgrounds, cultures and circumstances as we live out our unity in Christ.

(Ephesians 2:12-14,
Galatians 3:28)



Bible & Gospel Centred

God's Word is our highest authority in life and doctrine. The good news about Jesus is the focal point of all our teaching and ministries.

(John 17:17)

C. LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The leadership structure takes the form of a **Church Council (Elders)**, a **Ministry Committee (deacons)** and a **Finance Committee**.

The Elders are responsible for the general oversight and direction of the church and its spiritual and pastoral care. Elders must adhere to the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

The **Mincom** consists of various portfolio leaders (e.g. missions, men's ministry, music ministry) and is responsible for organising events, recruiting teams, and putting into action our strategic objectives. Portfolio leaders must adhere to the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The **Fincom** consists of members gifted and experienced in finance. The Fincom makes recommendations to the Elders and is responsible for the good financial governance of our church.

Nomination and Election of Elders/ Church Council

Every two years CCT **members** will be asked to vote for men that the existing Elders believe would be able and competent to serve as future Elders. At the **Annual General Meeting**, all nominees will be presented to the church body and the members present will be asked to vote for the required number by majority secret ballot. There is no limit to the number of Elders. An Elder's term of service is four years.

The number of Elders to be elected will be determined by the current Elders after due consideration of the size of the Church (members and adherents) and the work to be undertaken.

REACH SA requirements for Elders (Church Council members)

The following is from the REACH SA Handbook of Procedures: It is important to emphasize that leadership in any Christian Church is a solemn responsibility and therefore only people of proven Christian profession and character who are full members of a congregation are eligible to stand for election as Council member.

A person so elected must be one who is wholly committed both to the doctrines, standards and practices of REACH-SA and also to the life and witness of the local Church.

The Council members are to serve the flock in accordance with 1 Peter 5:2-3. Ultimately, they are answerable to Synod and the Presiding Bishop for the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities. They are bound by the provisions of both the local Church Constitution and the Constitution of REACH-SA.

Office bearers represent not only the Church but also the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, their personal behaviour must be above reproach at all times. Before anyone is appointed into a leadership role in any congregation it is essential that it be ascertained that he is a true Christian with a good public standing and testimony in the community. He must be moderate and temperate in all his habits. He must have been an active member of REACH-SA for a period of at least two years and must accept the **Constitution of REACH-SA. All Church Council members are required to sign the Declaration of Loyalty when taking up their duties.** He thus acknowledges that he is in submission to the leadership of the Church.

Should any minister or congregation feel that they can no longer abide by REACH-SA practices, doctrines or standards, they are to vacate any property they occupy on being called on to do so by the Presiding Bishop and Trustees.

Declaration of Loyalty:

Before entering upon his/her duties every Member of the Church Council shall solemnly assent to and subscribe his/her name to the following Declaration of Loyalty before two witnesses: -

In accepting office in the congregation of Church "I,solemnly promise to adhere to the Constitution of the Church of England in South Africa and to receive as authoritative the standards of faith and doctrine as contained in the 39 Articles of Religion, all forms of services, and discipline of the Church in accordance with that Constitution and all subsequent amendments thereto. I further solemnly promise to acknowledge the authority, and to carry out the decisions of Synod and the lawful instructions of the officers of the Church, and to work for the peaceful and Christian fellowship of the Church, its Clergy, Synod members and all Churches.

I further solemnly declare that if at any time hereafter while holding office in the Church I no longer hold to the doctrines contained in the 39 Articles of Religion or no longer accept the authority of Synod or the lawfully appointed officers of the Church, provided that they continue to act in accordance with the terms and spirit of the Constitution of the Church I shall resign from the Church of England in South Africa and any of its Churches within thirty days of being called upon to do so by the Synod, or the Presiding Bishop and/or Area Bishop acting in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Church, or by majority vote of the Council or congregation of the Church to which I belong and

I shall vacate and return any property of the Church of England in South Africa or any of its Churches which I may be occupying or holding whether officially or personally within the aforesaid period of thirty days.

Name.....

Signature

D. MINISTRY COMMITTEE PORTFOLIOS



Every alternate year we go through the process of appointing a new Mincom. Our Mincom consists of members who are willing and able to lead specific ministries. One must be a member to serve on the Mincom. The ministries that currently make up the Mincom are:

Missions Ministry

Music ministry

Women's ministry

Men's ministry

Rooted Youth

Children's ministry

Sidesmen ministry

Kitchen and Catering ministry

Church Care ministry

Audio Visual ministry

Church Maintenance ministry

Mercy Ministry

Church operations

E. MEMBERSHIP

We view membership very seriously and consider membership an essential step for Christians who are involved in their local church.

Membership is our way of distinguishing those who are Christians committed to serving at Christ Church Tygerberg from those who are just regular visitors, who we cannot hold spiritually accountable.

When becoming a member, you are saying to the church that you are a Christian and you would like to fall under the spiritual oversight of the Elders for your own good and growth.

The Elders hold members accountable for their actions and attitudes, and *vice versa*.

Being a member means you have a vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and may stand for election onto our leadership structures.

Requirements

We require all members to be Christians, to attend Christ Church Tygerberg for at least six months, to be baptised and to agree to submit to the constitution of the REACH-SA. We also highly encourage members to be part of a Bible Study to facilitate fellowship, discipleship and care.

Persons applying for membership must be over 18 years of age. (The confirmation of under 18's does not give automatic church membership.) Anyone wishing to become a member must complete an application form and attend the membership course.

Christians transferring from other REACH-SA church will be received as members, but are also required to participate in the membership course in order to acquaint themselves with the ethos of our church. The church council must approve all new membership.

Church discipline and the suspension of membership

The Church Council must take any complaint of habitual, unrepentant sin against the ministers, elder, any office bearer or member of the church. All allegations are viewed very seriously because the witness of the church and the gospel is at stake.

The church council must either investigate the matter themselves or appoint a sub-committee of their number to do so.

The disciplinary process must follow that of Jesus' teachings in Matthew 18:15-18 and as laid out in the CCT constitution.

It is of the utmost importance that these investigations be handled as expeditiously as possible.

Should it be found that there is substance to the complaint of habitual sin then repentance and reconciliation should be sought. Should the case involve misconduct on the part of the minister, either in morals or doctrine, the matter must be reported to the Area Bishop without delay.

The church council has the power to suspend membership after giving written notice to such member of its intention to do so, if it is satisfied that the member concerned no longer qualifies to be a member, unless the member has ceased to be a habitual worshipper on account of age or ill health or any other similar valid reason.

Any criminal activity or abuse must be reported to the relevant civil authorities.

Adherents

If someone does not wish to become members or who might not qualify for one or other reason, such people can be regarded as adherents. They will have no vote at any congregational meeting. (eg. AGM) Such a person may also not be elected to the Church Council. Potential adherents should notify the Church Council of their intention to become adherents.

F. MARRIAGE

We encourage marriage and believe that it is a good, God-established, life-long union between one man and one woman.

Couples wanting to be married in a Christian wedding service need to demonstrate their commitment to Jesus by attending church regularly and attending pre-marital counselling sessions with a

designated person or couple. We long for marriages built on the solid foundation of God.

Who will we marry?

CCT is committed to building strong marriages, and we therefore want to do everything possible to help a man and a woman develop a solid foundation from the very beginning of their marriage commitment. We view the agreement to perform a wedding ceremony to be more of an ongoing partnership than a onetime event.

Our responsibility in this partnership is to provide tools for building a strong marriage and to give clear direction concerning the scriptural guidelines that God has established for marriage.

We believe that God created the marriage covenant as a gift for men and women and he has given us basic principles and guidelines that will help us to experience joy and fulfilment in marriage.

Application of these principles, in accordance with this policy, will help participants to have a wonderful wedding experience and increase the potential for a strong and growing marriage.

Accordingly, the following requirements for any man and woman desiring to be married by our ministers have been established:

1. We will only officiate at the wedding of **active attendees** of our church or another gospel-centred church.
2. A minimum of six months' preparation time. This will allow time to complete the required **premarital counselling**.
3. A believer should only marry another believer. Scripture is very clear that those who have given their lives to Christ and live in authentic relationship with him should not be joined together with someone who has not also been transformed by Jesus Christ.

For this reason, we will not conduct a wedding that joins a Christian together with a non-Christian (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; 1 John 5:1-5).

4. We believe that God created the marriage covenant as a gift for all men and women. We are willing to officiate as legal Marriage Officers in the marriage of two non-Christians and the same requirement guidelines will apply.
5. The principle of maintaining sexual purity prior to marriage is defined very clearly and is greatly encouraged in Scripture (1 Cor. 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 4:3-8).
6. We strongly recommend newly married couples who attend CCT to commit to join a midweek Bible Study or similar group.

Note: If a couple believes they have extenuating circumstances regarding any aspect of this marriage policy, they should chat to the ministers and explain their situation.

Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that:

1. Marriage is the *sacred union* between one man and one woman and God's intention is for marriage to last a lifetime.
2. Divorce is *not* always sinful.
3. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of *sexual immorality*.
4. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of *desertion* by an unbelieving spouse.
5. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of abuse by a spouse.
6. When the divorce was *not permissible*, any subsequent remarriage (to someone other than the original spouse) results in adultery.

7. In situations where the divorce *was permissible*, remarriage is also permissible.
 8. Improperly divorced and remarried Christians should *stay as they are*, but repent and be forgiven of their past sins and make whatever amends are necessary.
- * A big challenge is that there are so many unique scenarios that don't lend themselves to easy answers. There are so many intricate, specific situations that we can't possibly speak to all of them. These situations require tremendous wisdom because it's not always clear what is the correct counsel. Please speak to the ministers or elders if needs be.

G. BAPTISM

Article 27 of the 39 Articles speaks to this issue:

Baptism is a sign of the faith we profess and a mark that differentiates Christian persons from those who are unbaptized; and it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth by which, as by an instrument, those who receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promises of forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signified and sealed, and faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God. The baptism of young children is under all circumstances to be retained in the Church as a practice fully agreeable with the institution of Christ.

Individuals who turn to Jesus should be baptised by water as a public sign of the inward reality.

The children of believers (or at least one believing parent) should also be baptised as a sign that God promises to fulfil the covenant promises in that child, when the covenant obligations are met (i.e. faith in Jesus).

While we believe in the practise of infant baptism, we realise that Christians have historically had different views and therefore view the issue of baptism (and mode of baptism) as an issue of conscience.

To ensure spiritual accountability we require parents (or at least one parent) wishing to baptise their children to be members of Christ Church Tygerberg.

See **addendum 1** at the back of this booklet for more info.

H. CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is the act in which young people, who were baptised as infants, publicly confirm the faith in which they were baptised.

1. Confirmation and Baptism

Confirmation is so called because it is the opportunity for teenagers to 'confirm' the promises made on their behalf at their infant baptism. They are now at an age where they can re affirm those promises and claim them publicly as their own. When the young adult confirmed says to the church, *"I am a Christian. I have chosen to trust Jesus and I want you to know that. I accept the faith of my parents as my faith."*

If a teenager has not been baptized as an infant, then adult baptism is the appropriate public expression of faith. It would be meaningless for them to confirm promises that were never made over them as an infant, and redundant to be baptized and then confirmed on the same evening.

As the order of service for confirmation and adult baptism is quite similar, it is appropriate for teenagers who are coming forward for baptism to join with the confirmation candidates in the confirmation classes as their baptismal preparation. The service set aside for confirmation then includes both baptism and confirmation.

2. Who is it for?

Confirmation is for Christian young people. This might sound obvious, but it is often NOT the assumption of teenagers or their parents. It is entirely proper (however unpopular) for us to turn down a potential confirmation candidate if they are not a Christian. This also means that confirmation classes should not be run primarily as evangelism, although we should always bear in mind that during the course there may be those who come to realization that they are not believers.

Also, as confirmation is a local church event, it is only for those who have made our local church their spiritual home. Sometimes we are asked by parents to confirm their kids even though they go to another church or even no church at all. When a teenager is confirmed, they make a promise to continue in bible reading, prayer and fellowship at our church, and we in turn make a promise to encourage and support them in this endeavor. We can only do this if the confirmation candidates are regulars at your church / youth group. Therefore, we will not confirm teenagers who attend another church (or no church at all).

3. The age for Confirmation

Experience shows that the later teenage years (16-18) are when young people are responsible enough to claim the promises made at their infant baptism with sufficient understanding and clear consciousness.

4. Confirmation in REACH-SA

Article 20 of the 39 Article begins,

'The Church has the power to prescribe rites and ceremonies and has authority in theological controversies . . .

(as long as it doesn't prescribe) . . . anything that is contrary to God's written word . . . '

As there is nothing in Scripture which forbids conducting a service where young Christians, after a period of teaching and reflection are given a chance to publicly confirm their faith, and since such a practice has much to commend itself in the light of Biblical teaching and practical wisdom, confirmation as event in local church life is entirely appropriate.

5. Challenges that some churches encounter with confirmation

- In some churches confirmation is a traditional or cultural 'rite of passage'. As a result, parents push their teenagers into confirmation even though they are not Christian or in regular fellowship at their local church.
- Teenagers come for confirmation but then disappear from the church or youth group shortly afterwards.
- Confirmation is seen by some as a way to keep restless kids in the church
- Confirmation is often confused with evangelism. When this happens it actually encourages non-Christian teenagers to become confirmation candidates and make promises they have no intention of keeping.

6. Confirmation and membership

Confirmation does not lead to automatic church membership.

I. FUNERALS

Conducting funerals and memorial services are wonderful opportunities to remind those who grieve that Jesus has conquered death and now grants new life to all those who put their confidence in him. We are more than happy to officiate at the funeral services of members and non-members.

The Bible teaches that Christians who die go to be with Jesus in Paradise, while they await the final judgement, the establishment of the renewed universe and their renewed bodies. When Jesus returns, and the renewed earth is established, all God's people will receive glorious, new bodies (like Jesus' resurrected body).

Therefore, it does not matter whether the old body is buried or cremated, as God will give us new bodies. Burial or cremation is a matter of conscience.

J. HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper is a sacrament established by Jesus himself e.g. Luke 22:13-23. The aim of Holy Communion is to *remember* afresh that Jesus died for us and thereby strengthen our faith. We use bread and grape juice to remind us of Jesus' body and blood. The bread is not magic, nor the grape juice. It is ordinary bread and grape juice and remains ordinary bread and grape juice. What makes Holy Communion special is that we eat and drink specifically to remember and meditate on *Jesus' death for us*.

The Bible commends us to eat and drink worthily, which means that we intentionally turn from sin (1 Corinthians 11:28) and harbour no ill towards others (Matthew 5:23-24).

Those that eat and drink in an unworthy way are in danger of facing discipline or judgment from God (1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

All Christians, whether members or not, are invited to celebrate Holy Communion with us. It is our practise to celebrate communion once a month during the morning service.

For good order, we encourage young people to be confirmed or spiritually prepared by their parents before sharing in the Holy Communion service.

K. SUNDAY SERVICES

Our Sunday services (**8:15 & 10am**) are public events, open for all and anyone to attend. Our priority is the Bible as it is God's message to us.

On a typical Sunday, we will praise God with music, pray (sometimes together as when we say the General Confession), read from the Bible and listen to the preacher explain the passage that was read. We encourage all to stay after the service for coffee and fellowship.

L. CONNECT GROUPS

We meet in small groups at different venues during the week to study the Bible, pray and enjoy friendship. We encourage all our members to be part of such a group for their own spiritual growth, accountability and pastoral care. Details of our connect groups are available in the church's weekly emailed News Flash.

M. YOUTH, TYGER (KIDS) CLUB & KIDZ KINGDOM

Our teenagers meet together on Friday evenings to enjoy friendship and study the Bible.

During both Sunday morning church services, we have an age-appropriate Kidz Kingdom (Sunday school) for ages 4 to grade 7.

We believe that children from a very young age can have a relationship with God and grow to be more like Jesus. There is a Movers & Shakers group for 2-3 year olds and a baby room.

N. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Christian Church is one of the few places where vulnerable people and in particular children, should feel welcome and at home.

However, it is also a place where unscrupulous people find victims for their evil ways.

Christ Church Tygerberg seeks to provide a safe nurturing environment to safeguard the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all children participating in all church activities.

We have adopted and implemented a **Child Protection Policy** that clearly defines practices and procedures surrounding the protection of children in our care. All volunteers and staff that work with children need to adhere to our Child Protection Policy.

The policy can be downloaded at:

<http://www.christchurchtygerberg.org.za/resources/child-protection-policy.html>

O. STATEMENT ON ABUSE

Abuse can be defined as any act, or failure to act, resulting in imminent risk, serious injury, death, physical, or emotional or sexual harm, or exploitation of another person.

We condemn all forms of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, and/or verbal abuse.

We believe that the biblical teaching on relationships between men and women does not support, but condemns abuse (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 5:25-29; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7-8; 1 Pet. 3:7).

Abuse is destructive and evil. Abuse is a hallmark of the devil and is in direct opposition to the purposes of God. Abuse must not be tolerated in the Christian community.

We believe that the local church and Christian ministries have a responsibility to establish safe environments; to execute policies and practices that protect against any form of abuse; to confront abusers and to protect the abused and counsel abused persons to remove themselves from abusive situations.

We believe that church and ministry leaders have a special obligation to assist in reporting abuse to civil authorities, when required.

We believe that the church must offer tender concern and care for the abused and must help the abused to find hope and healing through the gospel. The church should do all it can to provide ongoing counseling and support for the abused.

The wounds of abuse run deep and so patience and mercy are needed over the long-haul as the church cares for the abused.

We believe abusers need to confess their crimes both to civil and church authorities, to repent of their sin, and to trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation and forgiveness from their sin.

Abusers must commit to a program of change supervised by a trained professional.

The church should not protect abusers or repentant abusers from the legal consequences of their actions.

We believe that by the power of God's Spirit, the Christian church can be an instrument of God's love and healing for those involved in abusive relationships and an example of wholeness in a fractured, broken world.

South African law mandates the reporting of any abuse or suspected abuse of children (under 18's).

Please see our Child Protection Policy for more info.

Stop Gender Violence helpline: 0800-150-150

P. PLANNED GIVING

Every year we ask the church (regular attendees and members) to prayerfully consider their giving for the year ahead.

These personal commitments are in no way policed or monitored, as we believe that our giving is between us and God.

Giving remains anonymous with only the treasurer and church accountant privy to our bank statements.

Q. CONSTITUTION

We adhere to the constitution of Christ Church Tygerberg for reasons of order and good governance. Copies of the constitution are available on request at the information desk.

R. USE OF CHURCH PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

Members may make use of the church premises as approved by the Elders. Table and chairs may be borrowed by members. Please speak to the church secretary in this regard.

S. WEBSITE & COMMUNICATION ETC

We have a website, Facebook page, Instagram account and YouTube channel. Make sure the info desk at church has your email address and we will email you important updates and info. You can sign up to our church WhatsApp group or weekly emailed News Flash to keep up to date with church events and communication.

T. CROSS CENTRAL CHURCH & PARTNER CHURCHES

We are privileged to have a Daughter Church in Parow, Cross Central Church, which we support with financial and other resources. We also partner with Christ Church Khayelitsha and Trinity Church in Mitchells Plain.

U. STATEMENT OF FAITH

Christ Church Tygerberg's Statements of Faith and core beliefs are, like all churches in REACH-SA, summed up in the **three creeds** (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed & Athanasian Creed) and the **39 Articles of Religion**.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, he died and was buried. He descended into the place of the dead. On the third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; in Christ's holy universal church, the fellowship of Christians, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*The Nicene Creed & Athanasian Creed are found on
www.reachsa.org.za*

V. THE 39 ARTICLES OF RELIGION

The 39 Articles of Religion sum up our doctrinal position as a Reformed, Evangelical, Anglican Church.

1. THE HOLY TRINITY

There is only one living and true God. His existence is everlasting, without beginning or end. As a spiritual being, not limited by a body and bodily members, and free from bodily desires and impulses, his power, wisdom, and goodness are infinite. He is the Creator and Preserver of all things whether seen or unseen. In the unity of this one true God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are one in being, power and eternity.

2. OF THE WORD OR SON OF GOD

The Son, who is the Word of the Father (Jn 1.1), is the Son of the Father from everlasting to everlasting. He is truly and eternally God, one with the Father in being.

He took our human nature to himself in the womb of the virgin Mary, so that two full and perfect natures, his divine and our human nature, were united in the one person of the incarnate Son, never to be divided.

There is therefore one Christ who is truly God and truly man, and who truly suffered, was crucified, died and was buried. By Christ's sacrifice of himself, not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men, God was reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5.19).

3. CHRIST'S DESCENT TO THE GRAVE

As Christ died for us and was buried, so also it is to be believed that the giving up of his life was a reality.

4. OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Christ truly rose again from the dead. His was a bodily resurrection, with flesh, bones and all things that belong to the perfection of our human nature. His ascension was a bodily ascension into heaven, where he is now enthroned until the last day, when he will return to judge all men.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son is one in being, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, and thus is truly and eternally God.

6. THE SUFFICIENCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE FOR OUR SALVATION

Holy Scripture sets forth everything that is necessary for our salvation. Consequently, nobody should be required to believe as an article of the Christian faith, or to regard as necessary for salvation, anything that is not found in Scripture.

By the term Holy Scripture, we mean the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, namely:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

The books known as the Apocrypha are read by the Church, as Jerome said, because of the examples they provide of the heroic lives and faithful conduct; but the Church does not use these books to establish any doctrine.

7. THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New Testament. In the Old as well as in the New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind through Christ; for Christ, who is both God and man, is the only Mediator between God and man. Therefore, we must not pay attention to any who say that in the Old Testament the patriarchs and others were limited in their expectation to transitory promises.

Although the ceremonies and rites of the Law which God gave through Moses, are not binding on Christians, and the civil precepts of the Law are not essential for the organisation of any state or commonwealth, yet no Christian is free from obedience to the commandments known as moral.

8. THE THREE CREEDS

The three creeds, namely the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, should be received and believed without reservation, because they may be proved from Holy Scripture.

9. ORIGINAL SIN

Original sin does not consist in imitating the sin of Adam, (as the Pelagians wrongly teach), but is the fault and corruption of the nature with which all descendants of Adam are born. It is due to original sin that we have departed very far from the original righteousness in which we were created, and are naturally inclined to evil, with the result that there is a constant war between flesh and the spirit. Accordingly in every person born into this world, original sin is deserving of God's wrath and condemnation.

This infection of our nature remains even in those who in Christ are reborn. Because of it the desire of the flesh is not submissive to the Law of God.

True though it is that there is no condemnation awaiting those who believe and are baptised, yet the Apostle asserts that all ungodly desires are in themselves sinful.

10. FREE WILL

Since the fall of Adam man's state is such that he is unable, by his own natural strength and good works, to turn and dispose himself to believe and call upon God. Consequently, we have no power of our own to do good works that are pleasing and acceptable to God, unless the grace of God is first given through Christ, so that we may have a good will, and that same grace continues at work within us to maintain that good will.

11. JUSTIFICATION

It is not because of any good works or deservings on our part, but only by faith which rests on the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we are accounted righteous before God.

Therefore, the doctrine of our justification by faith alone is most edifying and full of strength and comfort. (This doctrine is more fully explained in the Homily on Justification.)

12. GOOD WORKS

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow after our justification, cannot put away our sins, and are subject to the severity of God's judgment, yet, inasmuch as they are done in Christ and for His sake, they are pleasing and acceptable to God; for they spring necessarily from a true and vital faith, and are indeed the evidence of a vital faith, just as a tree is recognised by its fruit.

13. WORKS BEFORE JUSTIFICATION

Works that are done before receiving the grace of Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit are not pleasing to God, because they do not spring from faith in Jesus Christ; nor is it true (as some say) that they render us fit to receive grace or are deserving of grace.

On the contrary, the fact that such works are not done as God has willed and commanded them to be done can only mean that they have the nature of sin.

14. WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION

Works which are supposedly done voluntarily beyond and in excess of what is required by God's commandments (known as works of supererogation)

cannot be taught without self-centred arrogance and irreverence; for it is claimed that persons who perform such works render to God not only as much as it is their duty to render, but actually do for God more than is of bounden duty required; whereas Christ plainly stated, "When you have done all that is commanded, say, we are unprofitable servants." (Luke 17.10).

15. CHRIST ALONE WITHOUT SIN

As our true fellow man Christ was like us in all respects, with the exception only of sin, from which he was completely free, both in his flesh and in his spirit. He came into the world to be the Lamb without spot or blemish, and by his once-for-all sacrifice of himself to take away the sins of the world as the one in whom, as St John says, there was no sin (Jn 1.29; 1 Jn 3.5).

But all the rest of us, though we have been baptized and born again in Christ, continue to offend in many things; and "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1.8).

16. SIN AFTER BAPTISM

Not every serious sin committed after our baptism is an unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. Therefore, persons who fall into sin after baptism should be encouraged to repent. After we have received the Holy Spirit it is possible for us to turn away from the grace we have experienced and to fall into sin, and it is possible for us who have fallen to rise again and amend our lives by the grace of God. Therefore, persons who say that they cannot sin any more as long as they continue in this life (claiming to have attained sinless perfection), or who deny any opportunity of forgiveness to those who truly repent, are to be condemned.

17. PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

Predestination to life belongs to God's everlasting purpose. By this is meant that before foundation of the world, it is his unchangeable decree, in accordance with his secret counsel to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen in Christ, and to bring them by him to everlasting salvation, as vessels of his mercy (Rom 9.21ff). Therefore, those on whom such an excellent blessing of God is bestowed are called according to God's purpose by the Holy Spirit working in them in God's good time; through grace they obey this calling and are freely justified by God; they become the

sons of God by adoption (Rom 3.24; 8.15f); they are conformed to the image of his only Son Jesus Christ; they lead holy lives that are given to good works to the glory of God; and at last, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting bliss (Rom 8.29f; Eph 2.8-10).

The reverent consideration of our predestination and election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable strength to godly persons, who feel the working in themselves of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly passions and drawing their thoughts upward to high and heavenly realities. This teaching is welcome to us both because it strongly establishes and confirms our assurance of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, and also because it kindles in us a fervent love to God.

For unregenerated persons, however, who are moved by idle curiosity and who do not have the Spirit of Christ, to be constantly confronted with the doctrine God's predestination is dangerous and disastrous, since the devil uses it to drive them either to despair or to abandon themselves to immoral and ungodly living, which is no less perilous than despair. Furthermore, we must accept God's promises in the way in which they are ordinarily presented to us in Holy Scripture, and in all that we do the will of God is to be followed precisely as it is revealed to us in the Word of God.

18. SALVATION IN CHRIST ALONE

They are to be condemned as false teachers who assert that persons will be saved no matter what beliefs they hold or what sect they belong to, provided they sincerely lead their lives according to those beliefs and to the light of nature; for Holy Scripture insists that it only by the name of Jesus Christ that we may be saved (Acts 4.12).

19. THE CHURCH

The visible Church of Christ is a gathering of believing people in the which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments are ministered with due order and discipline as ordained by Christ.

Together with other churches, the Church of Rome has erred, not only matters of conduct and ceremonial but also in matters of doctrine.

20. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

The Church has power to prescribe rites and ceremonies and has authority in theological controversies; but it is not lawful for the Church to prescribe anything that is contrary to God's written Word, or to expound one passage of Scripture in such a way that it disagrees with another. Therefore, although the Church is a witness and a guardian of Holy Scripture, yet it is not open to it to prescribe anything contrary to Scripture, or to enforce anything not found in Scripture to be believed as necessary to salvation.

21. THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL COUNCILS

Even general councils may err when they meet, and sometimes have erred, even in issues of theological importance - for such councils are composed of men, not all of whom may be governed by the Spirit and the Word of God. Therefore, nothing declared by such councils as necessary for salvation has binding power or authority unless it is plainly taught in Holy Scripture.

22. PURGATORY

The Romish teaching about purgatory, pardons, the worship and adoration of images and relics, and also the practice of praying to saints, is a futile deception, which, far from being grounded in Scripture, is repugnant to the Word of God.

23. MINISTERING IN THE CONGREGATION

No man is permitted to take upon himself the office of public preaching or ministration of the sacraments before he has been called and appointed to fulfil this office.

Those persons should be accepted as lawfully called and appointed who have been selected and called to this work by men entrusted with public authority in the Church to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

24. THE LANGUAGE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

It is plainly incompatible with the Word of God, and with the custom of the primitive Church to conduct public worship or to minister the sacraments in the Church in a language the people do not understand.

25. THE SACRAMENTS

The sacraments prescribed by Christ are badges and tokens of our profession as Christians, and, more particularly, they are trustworthy witnesses and effectual signs of God's grace and good will to us. By them God works invisibly in us, both arousing and also strengthening and confirming our faith in him.

Christ our Lord has ordained two gospel sacraments, namely baptism and the Lord's supper.

The five that are commonly called sacraments, namely, confirmation, penance, ordination, matrimony, and extreme unction are not to be received as sacraments of the gospel, since they have in part developed from a false understanding of apostolic practice and in part represent states of life allowed in the Scriptures.

Moreover, because they have no visible sign or ceremony commanded by God, they do not belong in the same category as the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.

The sacraments were not appointed by Christ to be a public spectacle or to be paraded for adoration, but to be used with due discipline. They have a beneficial effect or working only in those who receive them worthily; whereas those who receive them unworthily bring condemnation on themselves, as St Paul teaches (1 Cor 11.27ff).

26. THE UNWORTHINESS OF MINISTERS

Although in the visible Church there is always a mingling of evil good, and at times evil persons hold the chief positions in the ministry of the Word and sacraments, yet, because they do so not in their own but in Christ's name and perform their ministry by his commission and authority, we may avail ourselves of their ministry both in hearing the Word of God and in receiving the sacraments. The effect of Christ's ordinance is not taken away by their wickedness, nor is the grace of God's gifts diminished in the case of those who receive the sacraments rightly and by faith; for, although ministered by evil men, these are effectual on account of Christ's institution and promise.

Nevertheless, it belongs to the discipline of the Church that evil ministers should be investigated and that they should be accused by those who have knowledge of their offences, and, further, that, on being found guilty, they should by just judgment be deposed.

27. BAPTISM

Baptism is a sign of the faith we profess and a mark that differentiates Christian persons from those who are unbaptized; and it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth by which, as by an instrument, those who receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promises of forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signified and sealed, and faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God. The baptism of young children is under all circumstances to be retained in the Church as a practice fully agreeable with the institution of Christ.

28. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves for each other, but is especially a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death. Accordingly, for those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it the bread that is broken is a partaking of the body of Christ and the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ (1 Cor 10.16).

Transubstantiation (the teaching that the substance the bread and wine is changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ) in the supper of the Lord cannot be proved by Holy Scripture,

but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrows the nature of a sacrament, and has given rise to many superstitions. In the Lord's supper the body of Christ is given, taken and eaten only in a heavenly or spiritual manner, and faith is the means by which the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper.

The Sacrament of the Lord's supper was not commanded by Christ to be reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

29. THE PARTICIPATION OF UNBELIEVERS

Though wicked persons, and all in whom a vital faith is absent, physically and visibly press the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ with their teeth (as Saint Augustine says), yet in no sense are they partakers of Christ; on the contrary, they eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a reality to their own condemnation.

30. COMMUNION IN BOTH KINDS

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the laity, for both parts of the Lord's sacrament, the wine as well as the bread, ought by Christ's ordinance and commandment to be ministered alike to all Christian persons.

31. THE ONE OFFERING OF CHRIST FINISHED IN THE CROSS

Christ's offering of himself on the cross, once for all, is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is no other satisfaction for sin, but that alone.

Therefore, the sacrifices of masses, in which it is commonly said that the Priest offers Christ for the living and the dead, to obtain the remission of their punishment or guilt, are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.

32. THE MARRIAGE OF MINSTERS

Bishops, presbyters, and deacons are not commanded by God's Law to take vows of celibacy or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian persons, to marry at their own discretion, where they judge that it serves better to godliness for them to do so.

33. EXCOMMUNICATED PERSONS

Any person who by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church and excommunicated ought to be treated by the whole company of the faithful as a heathen and a traitor, until such time as he is reconciled by penitence and received back into the Church by a judge with authority to do so (cf. Mt 18.17).

34. THE TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH

It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies should be uniform and identical in every place; for these have at all times been diversified, and they may be changed to accord with the diversities of countries, times, and human customs, provided that nothing be ordained contrary to God's Word. Anyone who by his private judgment willingly and deliberately breaks the traditions and ceremonies of the Church which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are appointed and approved by common authority, ought to be openly rebuked (so that others may fear to follow his example) as one who offends against the common order of the Church, undermines authority, and wounds the consciences of weak fellow Christians.

Every particular or national church has authority to prescribe, change and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church which have been ordered only by human authority, providing that all things are done for edification.

35. THE HOMILIES

The two books of Homilies, which were set forth in the times of Edward VI and Elizabeth I respectively, contain godly and wholesome teaching.

36. THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS AND MINISTERS

The form of consecration of Archbishops and bishops and the ordering of presbyters and deacons, set forth in the time of Edward VI, contain all things necessary for such consecration and ordering and nothing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. Therefore anyone who is consecrated or ordained according to these rites we declare to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordained.

37. CIVIL MAGISTRATES

We do not give to our princes or rulers the right to minister either God's Word or the sacraments. The only prerogative which we recognise as having been given by God himself in Holy Scripture to all godly rulers is that they should rule all states and classes committed to their charge by God, whether ecclesiastical or secular, and restrain with the civil sword stubborn persons and evildoers. The Bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in this realm. Christians may be punished by the laws of the realm with death for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men to carry weapons and serve in wars at the command of the civil ruler.

38. PRIVATE PROPERTY

The wealth and possessions of Christians are not common to all nor is their right and title to own private property to be questioned. Nevertheless, every person ought to give liberally and according to his ability from the things he possesses to the poor.

39. OATH-TAKING

While we acknowledge that vain and rash swearing is forbidden to Christians by our Lord Jesus Christ, and St James (Mt 5.34-37; Jam 5.12), we judge that our Christian religion does not prohibit us from swearing an oath when it is required by the magistrate in the cause of good faith and charity, providing it is done according to the prophet's teaching in justice, judgment and truth.

W. ADDENDUM 1

- WHY WE BAPTISE BABIES AND ADULTS

Why do we baptise babies and adults at our church? Baptizing babies seems to be quite a controversial practise these days and often the baptizers are accused of flouting biblical principles for the sake of unbiblical tradition.

Convinced Baptists argue that we should only be baptising believing adults because there are, they maintain, only explicit biblical examples of believers' baptism in the New Testament and because, they maintain, baptism is reserved only for those that have expressed faith in Jesus.

We would like to challenge both those assertions.

REACH SA is certainly not opposed to baptising believers and regards that practise as biblical and indeed mandatory.

Article 27 of our statement of faith reads:

Baptism is a sign of the faith we profess and a mark that differentiates Christian persons from those who are unbaptized; and it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth by which, as by an instrument, those who receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promises of forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signified and sealed, and faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God. The baptism of young children is under all circumstances to be retained in the Church as a practice fully agreeable with the institution of Christ.

Four fifths of the above article refer to the baptism of believers, but as the article confirms, we also hold that it is biblical for (believing) parents to baptize their small children as a sign and seal of the new covenant, in continuation of the sign and seal of circumcision under the old covenant.

The question we must ask then is what was *circumcision* all about?

In Genesis, God made a covenant with Abraham to bless families from the entire world. The covenant sign would be the circumcision of all the males in Abraham's household, including the butler, the domestic help and the children (Genesis 17:9-14). Abraham's descendants were to keep the sign by circumcising all male babies. Foreigners who wanted to be part of Israel and serve Israel's God also needed to be circumcised.

Circumcision, for the male children, was therefore applied to those who had not yet expressed their faith in God. This may seem to be at odds with our natural evangelical inclination to see faith as a prerequisite to almost everything, but Paul explains the reasoning in Romans 4:11 when he refers to circumcision as a "*sign*" and a "*seal*". As a sign circumcision marked out the covenant people and illustrated that salvation involves the shedding of blood.

As a seal circumcision was a visible pledge from God to honour his covenant for those who expressed faith in him. The seal is simply a visible pledge from God that *when* the conditions of the covenant are met, the blessings he promised would apply.

Under the new covenant this principle remains true, as Peter implied when he told the Jewish crowd that the gospel promise was for them and their children (Acts 2:39). The covenant sign is no longer circumcision as the shedding of blood has already taken place, but the sign is now baptism which pictures the washing away of sin (cf. Colossians 2:11-22). So baptism continues to function as a sign and a seal of a family's faith in God and thus in the New Testament we have examples of whole families being baptised when a parent becomes a Christian (cf. Acts 16:30-31, 33). When men and women in the New Testament turned to Jesus they were baptized (believer's baptism) and children present were *also* baptised as a visible pledge from God that he would fulfil his covenant promises when the child in the future fulfilled the covenant conditions or obligations.

Both believers' and infant baptism must therefore be understood as visible pledges or observable reminders or sacraments from *God* to us (like the Lord's Supper), not pledges from *us* to God, of the gospel promise that all who trust in Jesus will be accounted righteous.

John Calvin wrote,

"Since God imparted circumcision, the sign of repentance and faith, to infants, it should not seem absurd that they are now made partakers of baptisms unless men choose to act against an institution of God...For it is most evident that the covenant, which the Lord once made with Abraham, is not less applicable to Christians now than it was anciently to the Jewish people, and, therefore, that word has no less reference to Christians than to Jews. (Institutes 4.16.20, 6)

Why then do we baptise believers' children and new adult believers? Because God's covenant, the framework within which he operates, has not changed.

X. ADDENDUM 2 - REACH SA'S STATEMENT ON THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

We are not a charismatic church and are concerned at the increasing indifference in many places to the unique authority of Holy Scripture as the inspired Word of God. We reject any teaching which places either the word of people or the experience of people in a position where it overrides, adds to or takes away from the Word of God.

Y. ADDENDUM 3 - REACH SA POSITION ON HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE

(In the interests of a literal, non-tendentious translation quotations from Holy Scripture are from the Revised Version of 1881)

a. Our Faith

We believe in God the Creator

1. The Church of England in Southern Africa is a community of men and women who believe in the one God who created the universe and continues to maintain its existence by his almighty will.

We believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

2. We believe that God has made himself known to and through the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament Scriptures.

We believe in Jesus Christ

3. We believe that God has offered himself to be known by human beings supremely by becoming a man, Jesus Christ,

who died to bear our guilt and secure our forgiveness, rose from death to inaugurate God's new creation, reigns in heaven to bring all things to their appointed goal, and who will return to judge the living and the dead, banish the wicked, and reign over God's renewed creation for ever. As individuals and as a church we acknowledge the Lordship and Deity of Jesus and seek to live under his leadership.

We believe in the Bible

4. It is through the Bible that God and Jesus are revealed to us, and we wholeheartedly confess its 66 books to be the true word of God, as have most Christian people and churches throughout the ages.

In these Holy Scriptures the Holy Spirit of God has caused to be written for the guidance of humankind everything needed for us to be able to enter a personal relationship with God and to know His will.

It is our deepest aspiration to be loyal to Christ, by seeking a true understanding of his Word, and by living in accordance with this yardstick.

b. Human Sexuality

The Source of our position

1. In seeking to know God's will regarding homosexuality it is important first that we understand His will regarding human sexuality. Because we seek not to propound our own view but to follow the leading of God's Word we will quote in full the main statements of the Bible which form the basis of our position. (In the interests of accuracy, quotations in the main are from the *Revised Version of 1881*)

Sexuality is a blessing from God

And God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them: and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living being that moves upon the earth Genesis 1.27-28.

2. We believe that God made us to represent Him on earth, that He made us male and female - two different sexes - that we might have children, populate the earth, and rule it for Him. The sexual unity between man and woman is intended as a blessing. We believe that men and women both are “the image of God” and also that their sexual relationship in some manner participates in the divine likeness.

Marriage is intended by God

And then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a help meet for him.....

Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. Genesis 2.18-25

3. We believe that men and women are made differently, and that the totality of their persons, including their physical anatomies, are designed in part to complement one another. We believe that the coming together of a man and a woman in marriage is a God-intended and God-pleasing arrangement. Jesus underlined this when he quoted this passage to demonstrate the evil of divorce.

What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.
Mark 10.9

Marriage points beyond itself

For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5.32-33

4. The marriage of a man and a woman is seen at various places in Bible as the picture of the relationship God intends with his people. The institution of marriage is seen as ultimately fulfilled in the covenant-love union of Christ and his Church (bride). Marriage, therefore, has a transcendent significance which renders any attempt to ape it in a same-sex relationship unchristian.

Marriage should be honoured and defended

Let marriage be had in honour among all, and let the bed be undefiled, for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Hebrews 13.4

5. Because of its importance as a God-ordained institution for the welfare of the human race, and its transcendent meaning as an image of the divine-human bond it is beholden on Christians to promote and protect marriage. God himself warns he will judge adulterers and fornicators. We understand fornication to include sexual intercourse prior to and outside of marriage, and homosexual physical intimacy.

c. Homosexual Acts

Rebellion against God has corrupted human behaviour.

And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6.5*knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless heart was darkened ...*

Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves. Romans 1.21,24

1. We believe that human beings have turned away from God, and have become evil in their behaviour and confused in their thinking. Homosexual passions, whatever their cause, belong to the fall; and the defence and glorification of homosexual behaviour stems from the confusion attendant on rejection of the Creator's instruction. As human beings we need God's instruction.

Homosexual acts forbidden by God in the Law of Moses

Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind. It is an abomination. And thou shalt not lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast, to lie down thereto. It is confusion.

Defile not ye yourself in any of these things; for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you, and the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. Leviticus 18.22-25

2. We stand under this prohibition of homosexual acts as the decree of God. We note that God's Word declares these acts defiling in the highest degree (abomination) and a twisting or perversion of God's intention in creation (confusion). We note further that this defilement is no mere matter of ceremonial purity but something abhorrent to God, leading to the extreme penalty. We note further that these acts are not just condemned in Israel as God's holy people, but brought God's judgement even upon Gentile people.

We know of no rescinding or lessening of the seriousness of what we can only accept as part of God's moral law binding on all people in all cultures in all ages.

Jesus declares homosexual acts and desires defiling

And he said (Jesus): That which proceedeth out of the man that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of man evil thoughts proceed fornication, thefts, murders, adulteries, coveting, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness; all these evil things proceed from within, and defileth the man. Mark 7.20-23.

3. Though it is sometimes said Jesus did not speak against homosexual acts, we are unable to exclude such behaviour from “fornications”, given the moral code of his day, and especially given his repeated approval (and intensification) of the moral law of the Old Testament.

Homosexual acts forbidden by the New Testament elsewhere

Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived , neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revellers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6.9-11

4. We declare ourselves bound to heed God’s warning that even under the new covenant those who commit homosexual acts will be excluded from the kingdom of God. We are also bound in love to repeat this warning to all people, along with the assurance that those who repent and abandon their evil ways will be washed clean by Christ’s sin-forgiving death and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

d. Homosexual Orientation

Homosexual dispositions in need of healing

For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.

Romans 1.26-27

1. The Bible does not discuss the issue of homosexual orientation in the terms used in the current debate. It is nevertheless plain that our fallenness as human beings extends deeper than actions to a twisting of our whole nature as persons, including our sexuality.

Given God's design of human beings as heterosexual, any variation from that design, however it manifests itself, must be seen to be part of our fallenness and therefore in need of redemption. Full redemption may only occur at the renewal of all things, though progress may, by God's grace, be made in this life. Either way, those with homosexual feelings are to conduct themselves in a way that is godly, without seeking to justify their orientation. Nothing more or less should be required of them than is required of every other Christian whose natural propensities tempt us to behaviour contrary to God's will.

No discrimination against people of alleged homosexual orientation

And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6.11

2. It is to be expected that people who have formerly lived a homosexual lifestyle, or who are perceived by others (perhaps even themselves) to have a homosexual orientation will be active members of God's church. An alleged homosexual orientation in a person who is not committing homosexual acts, nor promoting them, should not be a barrier to Christian fellowship, church membership, or church office.

However it is of the nature of what the Bible calls "the flesh" (our fallen human nature) to linger and tempt, so it is beholden on Christians to pray for and help one another, and to be cautious not to expose the weak to needless temptations.

Deep affections not to be branded homosexual

But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

1 Thessalonians 4.9

3. Relationships of deep affection between men and men and women and women are natural, good and honourable and we are careful not to brand them as homosexual. It is entirely honourable that friends should live together (in some cultures sleep in the same bed) without being stigmatized. Paul is careful to distinguish illegitimate homosexual behaviour from brotherly love, in which Christians are to excel.

e. The Christian Stance

1. It is beholden on every true Christian to follow the plain teaching of the Word of God, and therefore to avoid homosexual activity as sin on a par with stealing, murder, and covetousness, which displeases God and makes us liable to the judgement of God.

2. It is beholden on every Christian, and especially ministers and teachers, to warn the unwary that such behaviour is offensive to God and bound to bring punishment.
3. As believers in the Christian gospel it is every Christian's privilege to assure those who turn to Christ from whatever sinful path into which they may have strayed that they have God's complete forgiveness and that they are wholly cleansed and brought into fellowship with him, and are true members of his Church.
4. Repentant homosexual offenders are as eligible as any other church member (we are all repentant sinners) for appointment to offices of the church, in accordance with wisdom and the normal prudence, discipline and procedures of Scripture, and church.
5. The Sunday services of the REACH SA are public and open to everyone to attend; they are not restricted to members or believers. The REACH SA encourages enquirers to attend and expects they will be from various non-Christian lifestyles. Its churches know that sometimes a person will attend church as an enquirer for many months before they have decided for or against faith in Christ. It is not their policy to place any pressure on people other than to teach and explain the Word of God, praying that God will give conviction of its truth to every person's heart.
6. Church members or those seeking membership are expected to live a Christian life and to struggle against sin. Members seen to be practising a sinful lifestyle will be urged to change. If they refuse to do so they will be removed from any official church position or office, told not to attend the Lord's Supper, and their membership will be terminated until such a time as they indicate an honest repentance.

7. Christian churches, denominations, and ministers are recognized by their profession of Christ as Lord and their adherence to the Word of God. Churches, denominations and ministers which advocate lifestyles in open conflict with Holy Scripture have strayed from the historic Christian Faith. In particular, churches, denominations and ministers which by teaching, example and ordination policy declare to the world that homosexual activity is pleasing to God, when God's Word declares it evil and sufficient to exclude people from God's kingdom, endanger people's souls, and should be avoided by Christian people.

Z. ADDENDUM 4 - REACH SA POLICY ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN¹

Synod re-iterates the Scriptural principle, that within God's Church there are different but complimentary areas of responsibility for men and women. This clear biblical principle is confirmed while at the same time affirming and encouraging the acknowledgement of women's ministry.

To this end it was acknowledged that women function as:

- a. Pastoral and teaching assistants to the rector but exclusively in the context of women, children and teenagers;
- b. It is seen to be more appropriate for a woman to disciple and counsel women than for men to be doing so.

¹ Synod 2001

AA. ADDENDUM 5 - REACH SA DISTINCTIVES

The first Church of England (REACH SA) service on record in South Africa was conducted by a Naval Chaplain in 1794. After the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806, congregations were formed, churches were built and the Church of England in South Africa became fully functional.

The first Church of England church in South Africa was opened in 1814 in Simonstown.

After more than a century of work and witness, REACH SA (formerly known as the Church of England in South Africa) consolidated its position in 1938 by adopting a carefully formulated constitution which confirmed its Anglican and evangelical roots.

Who are we? What are our distinctives?

1. We are a Word centred church

As expressed in our motto ‘Your word above all things’, the Bible occupies a central place in our denomination. The Church of England in South Africa is a ‘Biblical’ church.

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense.

Article 6 *“Holy Scripture sets forth everything that is necessary for our salvation. Consequently, nobody should be required to believe as an article of the Christian faith, or to regard as necessary for salvation, anything that is not found in Scripture or that cannot be proved from Scripture.”*

2. We are a Missional church

We are evangelistic and missionary in outlook. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptize, teach and bring new believers to maturity. It is our aim 'to take the gospel to every man's front door' and to bring all people under the instruction and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

3. We are an Evangelical church

In the words of Bishop J.C. Ryle, we are evangelical because of *'the absolute supremacy we assign to Holy Scripture, the depth and prominence we assign to the doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption, the paramount importance we attach to the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation He has wrought for mankind, the high place which we assign to the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man and the importance we place on the outward and visible work of the Holy Spirit manifested in the life, conduct and behaviour of the believer in overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil'*.

4. We are a Protestant church

Traditional Protestantism stands for the following: Scripture Alone, Justification by Faith Alone and the Universal Priesthood of all Believers

The universal priesthood of all believers implies the right and duty of the Christian laity not only to read the Bible in their own mother tongue, but also to take part in the government and all the public affairs of the Church.

It is opposed to the hierarchical system which puts the essence and authority of the Church in an exclusive priesthood, and makes ordained priests the necessary mediators between God and the people.

REACH SA upholds the priesthood of all believers. It believes it can only be effective in evangelism and mission if it trains and empowers its laity for gospel ministry.

5. We are a Reformed church

REACH SA holds to the five points of doctrine which lie at the heart of the Reformation – grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, scripture alone and to the glory of God alone.

Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury in the time of King Henry VIII, was able to bring Martin Luther’s rediscovery of these great truths into the heart of the Church of England.

REACH SA is Reformed in that it embraces and articulates these great biblical insights taught by Luther, Calvin and the other reformers.

6. We are a Creedal (Confessional) church

REACH SA is a church that uses confessions of faith to express the teaching of the Bible. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith.

***Article 8:** The three creeds, namely the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and what is commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, should be received and believed without reservation, because they may be proved from Holy Scripture.*

We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God’s Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.

7. We are a Covenantal church

REACH SA can be called a covenantal church because it emphasizes God’s one single covenant with his people promised to Abraham, which is a covenant not simply with individuals but with families. The promises of God included Abraham’s children. We believe that God causes his covenant to run in the line of continued generations, i.e.

with believers and their children. It follows that the children of believers should receive baptism, the sign and seal of God's covenant.

8. We are an Episcopal church

REACH SA is an Episcopal church. It values Bishops as an ancient and well-tried form of ministry, agreeable to Scripture (though not actually required by Scripture). Bishops are viewed primarily as pastors and teachers.

We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, presbyters and deacons to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.

The ministry of women in the church is vital, but it does not require them to be ordained as Presbyters or Bishops. The proposal to admit women as Presbyters or Bishops would be a denial of the headship of the man as taught by the New Testament.

9. We are a Liturgical church

REACH SA is a liturgical church in that it values and uses set forms for its public services. In particular we are committed to the theology, principles and form expressed in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.

In practice that means that each service must be congregational and include these five elements:

1. Confession of sin
2. Praise and Thanksgiving
3. Petition
4. Reading of Holy Scripture drawn from both Old and New Testaments
5. Exposition of Holy Scripture

10. We are an Anglican church

The modern form of the Anglican Church first emerged during the religious Reformation of the 16th century, when the Church in England broke its ties with the Pope and the Church of Rome. From 1662 till today, the Book of Common Prayer, the 39 Articles and the Ordinal stand as the one touchstone of genuine Anglicanism.

Since the drawing up of its constitution in 1938, REACH SA has remained in fellowship with Anglicans around the world that hold to the same doctrinal tradition.

The Anglican Communion reaches across 161 different countries and includes over 70 million individual members. Therefore, being an Anglican means much more than belonging to a local parish church: it means joining a vast company of Christians across the whole world.

True Anglicanism provides a Biblical, historical and theological anchoring that many Christians seek. It allows us to root our convictions in the riches of the tradition of Christian thought and prayer that faithful followers of Jesus Christ have passed down to us.

Conclusion

Denominations are certainly not the answer to the world's ills, nor are they our last and only hope. But a denominational structure can be a valuable tool for the church in her mission.

The vast majority of world missions, church planting, discipleship, and other forms of ministry are done through denominational partnerships. Our gifts, passions, and experience have great influence through a combined national and worldwide denominational network.

A healthy denomination ultimately gives us strength. It's a home and not a prison. It allows us to share specific theological convictions, share resources and practice expressions of ministry relevant to our particular context.

John Stott sums up our evangelical tradition:

“First and foremost, by God’s sheer mercy, I am a Christian seeking to follow Jesus Christ.

Next, I am an evangelical Christian because of my conviction that evangelical principles (especially ‘sola scriptura’ and ‘sola gratia’) are integral to authentic Christianity, and that to be an evangelical Christian is to be a New Testament Christian, and vice versa.

Thirdly, I am an Anglican evangelical Christian, since the Church of England is the particular historical tradition or denomination to which I belong. But I am not an Anglican first, since denominationalism is hard to defend. It seems correct to me to call oneself an Anglican evangelical (in which evangelical is the noun and Anglican the descriptive adjective) rather than an evangelical Anglican (in which Anglican is the noun and evangelical the adjective).”

REACH SA is an Anglican Evangelical denomination.

With J.I. Packer we believe that “Anglicanism embodies the richest, truest, wisest heritage in Christendom.”

Bibliography

<i>Speculating Anglican Futures</i>	<i>J.I.Packer</i>
<i>Historic Anglicanism</i>	<i>Bishop Paul Barnett</i>
<i>Why I am an Anglican</i>	<i>John Stott</i>
<i>Thank God I’m Anglican</i>	<i>Michael Jensen</i>
<i>The Church of England – What it is</i>	<i>Roger Beckwith</i>

If you have any questions about the content of this booklet, you are most welcome to call the church office on 021 559 8812!