

**An Open Letter to the Church Universal and Local Churches About Gustavo Barros
(Gustavo De Barros, Guga Barros)**

To Whom It May Concern:

It is always difficult for those who love Christ's church to administer the "tough love" needed to hold an erring church leader accountable for his sinful actions. We would prefer to allow love to cover a multitude of sins and, as a wise king, to "overlook a matter." When the offense is only against ourselves personally, that may be the proper course of action. We want to avoid causing unnecessary division within the Body of Christ.

However, there are times when the offenses are ongoing and many who are unaware of what is happening are left unguarded by their local church shepherds. When casualties are caused by the stubborn pride and self-aggrandizement of a man who has been entrusted with the office of a Teaching Elder (or Pastor) in a local church, other church leaders are obligated by God to intervene. The offender is in a position to use his on-going influence over the minds and hearts of an uninformed congregation to do them great harm. Simply by distorting the truth, withholding important facts about the truth from his congregation, and calling for all his followers to shun those who could provide them with the truth, he crosses into the territory of a spiritual abuser, a man who manipulates his people with authoritarianism.

Whenever questioning the narrative of a church leader is accused of itself being sin, whenever members are required to "shun" their own family members and friends because those people have, allegedly, "slandered" the authoritarian leader, it becomes the responsibility of other Elders in the church to break the silence by warning the entire church community of what is happening.

Unchecked, spiritually abusive and authoritarian personalities tend to rise to ever-higher positions of inappropriate authority over others, first within their own churches, then in other organizations and denominations, simply by gas-lighting and preying upon the insecurities of those around them. Such spiritual manipulation and intimidation are not biblical leadership.

Our effort to "check" the progress of an errant church leader is called "Censuring" (see "Notes on the Topic of the Censure"). It must be done publicly in the hope that the offender will see the error of his ways, repent to God, and be restored to true fellowship with those he has abused and offended. But even if that ideal result is not accomplished by the Censure, at least the church community will have been warned and given opportunity to make their own decisions as to how they will proceed. A Censure is a clear and complete official statement of the relevant facts of an offense. Gustavo de Barros, (i.e., Gustavo Barros, Guga Barros), who is now the Lead Pastor-Elder of *Salem Reformed Baptist Church* (Salem, Oregon, U.S.A.), is being censured by the Elders, the Deacon, and the members of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* from which he fled from accountability and against which he willfully split Christ's and our local church.

That is the message of this Open Letter to the Church Community and this Censure (see below). It is submitted prayerfully and with great love and care for everyone involved.

Sincerely in Christ's Service,

Gracious Cross Reformed Church, in Salem, Oregon, U.S.A.



Signature

11-5-23

Date

Terry Ferrando, Clerk for the Board of Elders

Notes on the Topic of the Censure of Erring Pastors, Elders, and Ministers of Christ:

From the Presbyterian Church in America: — “30-1. The censures, which may be inflicted by church courts, are admonition, suspension from the Sacraments, excommunication, suspension from office, and deposition from office. The censures of admonition or definite suspension from office shall be administered to an accused who, upon conviction, satisfies the court as to his repentance and makes such restitution as is appropriate. Such censure concludes the judicial process. The censures of indefinite suspension or excommunication shall be administered to an accused who, upon conviction, remains impenitent.”

From:

<https://www.pcahistory.org/bco/rod/30/01.html#:~:text=The%2520censures%252C%2520which%2520may%2520be,office%252C%2520and%2520deposition%2520from%2520office>

From Western Reformed Seminary — “3. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from like offenses for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.”

From: https://www.wrs.edu/assets/docs/Courses/Westminster%20Standards/WCF_30--Church_Censures.pdf

From Like the Master Ministries, Tucson, AZ — “A very common sin is described in 3 John 9-11. The individual’s name was Diotrephes. He was a controlling leader in a church. The Apostle John warned in an open letter, 3 John, that if Diotrephes did not change, he (John) would take action against him. The leader’s sin was pride, evil words, sinful conduct, and control of others. The rebuke and warning were public.

In reality, any Christian who exhibits any pattern of sinful conduct and is unwilling to stop should be approached and encouraged to stop. If he is unwilling to stop, then the principles that Jesus gave us in Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:1-11, Galatians 6:1-2 should be followed. If he repents, we have rescued a brother caught in sin. If he refuses to stop, ultimately he may need to be removed just as Jesus directed.”

From: <https://www.neverthirstv.org/bible-studies/leadership-documents/sinning-pastors-what-to-do/>

Rev. William Jenkyn (1613–1685) Commenting on Jude 17 — “Great should be the care of the ministers of Christ to warn the church of approaching evils, especially of seducers. The apostles of Christ foretold the coming of these seducers among the Christians: Paul “warned every one night and day with tears,” Acts xx 31. They are watchmen, and it is their duty of every enemy. They should be unfaithful to your souls, if they should be friends to your adversaries. Their loving and faithful freeness herein creates them many enemies; but they can much more easily endure the wrath of man here for discharging, than the wrath of God hereafter for neglecting their duty. It is better that the lusts of the seducers should curse them awhile, than the souls of their people to all eternity. Ministers must defend as well as feed their flock, and keep away poison as well as give them meat; drive away the wolf as well as provide pasture. Cursed be that patience which can see the wolf, and yet say nothing. If the heresies of seducers be damnable, the silence of ministers must needs be so too.”

Objectives of the Censure of Gustavo Barros by *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*

We seek to:

1. Glorify the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
2. Having been patient and longsuffering toward Gustavo for over one and one-half years, we now seek to restore unity among biblical, Christ-honoring churches in the greater Salem, Oregon area;
3. Protect and warn Christians and the unsaved from an errant church teacher and leader (See; Titus 3:10: “As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him”; 2 Timothy 4:2: “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove,”; Romans 16:17: “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.”; Proverbs 27:6: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”);
4. Bring Gustavo Barros personally to repentance for bearing false witness against his former co-elders and deacons; for splitting the church in which he was serving on staff as a Teaching Elder/Pastor, for marginalizing and driving away everyone who disagrees with him on often the slightest point of opinion, and for launching a campaign to shun his former church members and personal family members; and
5. Reconcile and restore fellowship between Gustavo Barros and the Elders, Deacon, and members of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* (GCRC).

It is with gravity and a deep sense of duty that we write this Censure.

Censure of Gustavo Barros (Gustavo de Barros, Guga Barros)* by *Gracious Cross Reformed Church

We, the undersigned Elders of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*, hereby warn the church universal, all individual local churches in the greater Salem, Oregon area, and all individual persons whom it may concern that:

1. Gustavo Barros was consistently stubborn and willfully rebellious (contumacious) toward his former co-elders/pastors and both deacons of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*;
2. Gustavo has refused to submit to the same biblical church polity and discipline process that he himself helped put into place at *Gracious Cross*, applying it to others but refusing to submit to it himself;
3. Gustavo Barros, while rebelling against the church where he was serving on staff at the time as a salaried Teaching Elder/Pastor, intentionally and willfully engaged in a campaign of lies that split the church and he was the key leader who then founded a new splinter church named *Salem Reformed Baptist Church* (SRBC), where he now serves on staff as the salaried Teaching Elder and Pastor;
4. Gustavo Barros is continuing to bear false witness against the leaders and members of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* in his effort to hide the truth from his followers;
5. Gustavo Barros is leading a spiritually abusive campaign to require his followers to shun the members and leaders of the church that he left. He has split his own church and extended family by accusing his former church members and leaders of slandering him

simply for telling the truth concerning what he has done.

6. Gustavo Barros repeats a sinful pattern of turning against godly men and women who disagree with him on nearly any point, marginalizing them by speaking against them to others, and then driving them out of his congregation. This has happened to godly brethren in the past. It happened to a multi-year faithful Deacon of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*. And it has been reported to us to have already been repeated against a brother at *Salem Reformed Baptist Church*.
7. Gustavo Barros is, therefore, in light of these offenses, no longer biblically qualified to hold any office in any local church (e.g., elder, pastor, shepherd, bishop, deacon), nor to serve as a Bible teacher, ministry leader, seminary professor, or Bible college teacher.

A more detailed "Chronological Statement of the Relevant Facts Regarding Gustavo Barros" is available below for those who are interested.

We bear no ill will toward Gustavo Barros. We love him. We pray for him and we now lovingly admonish him to repent and to publicly retract his false witness against others. We further urge Gustavo to stop his campaign of shunning others and seek instead to be reconciled and restored to right relationships with all of his local church members and family members.

We eagerly encourage and invite Gustavo to meet with *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* for a full and complete process of repentance, peacemaking, reconciliation, and restoration for the sake of the unity of the Body of Christ Jesus, the only true Savior and Lord.

Board of Elders
Gracious Cross Reformed Church, Salem, Oregon, U.S.A.

Signature

Date

Terry Ferrando, Clerk for the Board of Elders

A Chronological Statement of the Relevant Facts Regarding Gustavo Barros (Gustavo de Barros, Guga Barros)

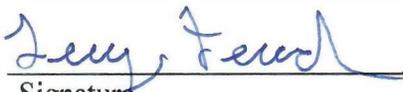
1. Gustavo Barros was confronted (early April 2022) by both of his co-elders/pastors while he was an elder/pastor at *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* (Gracious Cross) about his attempt to remove, a multi-year faithful Deacon of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*, from his office as a Deacon over what his co-elders/pastors found to be false charges by Gustavo.
2. Gustavo was contumacious toward his co-elders/pastors, and then toward both of the deacons.
3. To be clear, Gustavo had never brought any concerns or charges about any sin or offenses against his two co-elders/pastors during the many months prior to when they confronted him and, in fact, in late March 2022, Gustavo e-mailed to these two men that the church appeared to be healthy and well-shepherded by all of the three co-elders/pastors.
4. Gustavo was confronted again (on or about April 7, 2022) by both of his co-elders/pastors and both of the deacons of *Gracious Cross* about the serious relational and behavioral problems manifesting in his life, but he ignored the warnings of his friends (Proverbs 27:6).
5. Gustavo continued being contumacious toward his co-elders/pastors and the deacons, including delivering to them unilateral demands.
6. Gustavo was invited by his co-elders/pastors and the deacons on multiple occasions to seek counsel from godly elders from outside the church, including a mature, godly, church elder who was one of Gustavo's long-time mentors, but he rejected those invitations.
7. Gustavo then began, or already had been, recruiting members of *Gracious Cross* to join him in calling for his co-elders at *Gracious Cross* to abandon their responsibilities as Shepherds by stepping down and resigning from their church offices because of their disagreement with and confrontation of him, and leave himself, Gustavo, as the sole elder. Gustavo also called for one of the deacons, whom he had falsely accused of things, to step down and resign as a deacon.
8. On April 16, 2022 Gustavo received notice from his co-elder/pastors and the officers of *Gracious Cross*, with the agreement of both deacons, that his employment with *Gracious Cross* had been terminated for insubordination.
9. On April 16, 2022 Gustavo's position as an elder/pastor of *Gracious Cross* was terminated for and with cause by both of his co-elders/pastors, the officers of *Gracious Cross*, and with the agreement of both deacons.
10. Gustavo rejected the direct and strong counsel of a man (his trusted, older, more-than-a-decade mentor, and about two-decades elder in another church) that Gustavo must go through a biblical process of discussion and examination with his co-elders and deacons before leaving the church.
11. Gustavo again rejected an invitation by the two elders/pastors and both deacons to meet for consultation and mediation with the two elders, two other members of the church, and three other respected men of God from outside the church.
12. Gustavo had formal charges of multiple sins and disqualification as an elder laid against him in writing by the elders/pastors, with the full agreement of the two deacons, on April 20, 2022.
13. Gustavo refused to go through a process of biblical examination (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Proverbs 18:17) with his local church elders/pastors and the church in general to ascertain and/or adjudicate the truth of the charges laid against him.
14. Gustavo then claimed to "resign" after his employment and his role as an Elder of *Gracious Cross* had already been terminated.
15. Gustavo then contacted the members of *Gracious Cross* and bore false witness against both of his former co-elders and both of the deacons, accusing them of slander against

himself, despite the fact that the charges made against him cannot be slander if they are in fact true.

16. Gustavo resigned his membership with *Gracious Cross* on April 26, 2022 while he was in bad standing with the church.
17. Gustavo and his behaviors were the key issue that tore apart his former local church. Immediately after fleeing from the disciplinary process initiated by his co-elders/pastors at *Gracious Cross*, Gustavo was gathering (or already had been gathering) his followers and Gustavo and they formed *Salem Reformed Baptist Church (SRBC)*, a new “splinter church” around May of 2022.
18. Gustavo has since refused to heed any admonitions and warnings issued from *Gracious Cross* to him and to certain other individuals that were made in the form of a letter entitled “To Whom It May Concern” dated July 6, 2022.
19. Gustavo immediately began doing great damage to his own relationships with Christian brothers and sisters in various local churches, to churches at large, and within his own extended family, by accusing the leadership of *Gracious Cross* of doing the very things that he himself had done – dividing Christ’s body by slandering church authorities.
20. Gustavo continued to reject multiple invitations to open re-examination of the charges made against him with the assistance of godly and wise men who are trusted by both Gustavo and *Gracious Cross* and who are outside of both *Gracious Cross* and *Salem Reformed Baptist Church*.
21. Gustavo then launched a campaign to have all of his own family members, and all those who followed him away from *Gracious Cross*, to “shun” the leadership team of *Gracious Cross* for allegedly “slandering” him while they were simply attempting to administer biblical church discipline.
22. Gustavo has since delivered unilateral demands, over the course of 15 months (as of October 30th, 2023), that the leadership team of *Gracious Cross* (and also Christians who are not members of *Gracious Cross*) must repent of their alleged “sins” against him before he will consider ending his shunning campaign.
23. *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* was founded on Christ alone in Salem, Oregon in about the year 2013 and has been serving the Lord ever since.
24. Gustavo wrote a unilateral demand letter (dated July 10, 2023) on *Salem Reformed Baptist Church* stationery letterhead, despite the fact that this is a conflict between only Gustavo and only *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*, demanding to the current leaders of *Gracious Cross* that both of his former co-elders/pastors and both of the deacons of *Gracious Cross* at the time that Gustavo left *Gracious Cross* (some of whom are not members of *Gracious Cross*) to come to his new church and “... publicly confess their sins [alleged by Gustavo] and ask for forgiveness ...” when there has never been a problem or complaint lodged between *Gracious Cross* and *SRBC*.
25. Gustavo was the only elder-pastor for the first roughly one and one-half years of *Salem Reformed Baptist Church*’s existence (website, circa September 30, 2023; also, “Who we Are, Our Leadership, downloaded August 10, 2023), including when he sent his demand letter to *Gracious Cross* on *SRBC* letterhead (dated July 10, 2023).
26. Gustavo is also shunning all *Gracious Cross* church members who do not agree with his actions, false statements, accusations and demands.
27. Gustavo is also shunning individuals are who are not even members of *Gracious Cross* but who refuse to agree with or support his false statements and accusations.
28. Gustavo is shunning his own father-in-law, his former mentor and co-elder/pastor at *Gracious Cross*, an act of disloyalty toward his father-in-law, thereby abusing his authority as a husband, father, and son-in-law.
29. Gustavo is also shunning his mother-in-law who is also remains a member of *Gracious Cross*.
30. Gustavo is leading his wife in shunning her father and mother.
31. Gustavo is depriving his own children from having a loving relationship with their own grandparents during a crucial period in their child development. Gustavo is banning them from seeing their grandparents.

32. Gustavo encourages, by modeling and/or by his teaching, that others in his new church should shun all members of *Gracious Cross*, including members of their own families.
33. Gustavo has no standing or basis on which to claim that his former co-elders/pastors or the deacons have borne false witness against him, nor slandered him, because he has continuously rejected their counsel and run from the biblical process of examination and adjudication of the charges against himself.
34. Gustavo has continued to bear false witness against (Exodus 20:16) and slander (Proverbs 10:18; Psalm 15:3; 1 Corinthians 5:11, rail, revile) his former co-elders/pastors and the two deacons of *Gracious Cross Reformed Church*.
35. This *Censure* is a matter between only *Gracious Cross Reformed Church* and only Gustavo Barros and is for local churches and the church universal to read and understand. Though no other church has jurisdiction over this matter, we also care about those who are not members of *Gracious Cross* but against whom Gustavo is also bearing false witness. We welcome other churches and church leaders to help bring Gustavo to the scriptural table of repentance, peacemaking, reconciliation, and restoration with *Gracious Cross* and individuals outside of *Gracious Cross* whom he has harmed.
36. Up to the present time, Gustavo has repeatedly rejected all outreaches and invitations by *Gracious Cross* and the individual members of *Gracious Cross* to meet for biblical peacemaking, reconciliation, and restoration of relationships.

Board of Elders
Gracious Cross Reformed Church, Salem, Oregon, U.S.A.

Signature

Date

Terry Ferrando, Clerk for the Board of Elders

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