



Showing all good faith,  
so that in everything  
they may adorn the doctrine  
of God our Savior.

Titus 2:10

**Documents of  
CrossWay Bible Church**

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## Our Understanding Of THE PURPOSE OF OUR ARTICLES OF FAITH

In a perfect world, the simple statement, “We believe the Bible,” would be sufficient to communicate to everyone interested exactly what our convictions are. In this perfect world, this one Article of Faith would define our doctrinal positions to all.

Sadly, however, we do not live in a perfect world. Even amongst those of us who say we believe the Bible, there is a very wide spectrum in what we actually believe. Consequently, there is also great variation in what we teach and how we live. Furthermore, there are many in our world who do not even claim to know what the Bible teaches.

The purpose of our Articles of Faith is to clearly communicate what we believe the Bible teaches. It draws together in one place what the Bible says in various places dispersed throughout its pages on a certain topic.

In communicating clearly what we believe the Bible teaches, we are not only defining who is a Christian and who is not. We are also defining where we fit within greater Christianity. We are being open and honest about what we believe the Bible teaches, even though it may differ from what others say the Bible teaches.

Articles of Faith that are an accurate reflection of what we believe are helpful to those who may wish to join us in the future. By understanding our doctrinal positions, they will be able to evaluate their compatibility with us. In addition, it will help us to evaluate them as we decide whether to accept them as new members.

Our Articles of Faith are not meant to be an exhaustive list of everything we believe the Bible teaches. There are positions that we hold to as firmly as can be that are not found in our Articles of Faith. For example, we believe that stealing is sin. If one of our members were to habitually take things that do not belong to him and is unwilling to amend his ways, we would most certainly place him under church discipline. And yet nowhere in our Articles of Faith is it spelled out that we believe stealing is sin.

That begs the question: How do we decide what to include in our Articles of Faith? We would like to suggest two criteria:

1. For one thing, we include those doctrines that we consider to be foundational or central to the gospel. Theology proper, bibliology, anthropology, soteriology, and ecclesiology are probably the prominent doctrines that fit into this category.

2. The second thing that causes us to include certain beliefs in our Articles of Faith, and not others, is the time and the society in which we live. In whichever area God’s instructions are challenged, we are called upon to take a stand for what is right. To illustrate, let’s return to our example of stealing. If we lived in a society where this practice was generally considered to be acceptable even amongst believers, we might be inclined to include our doctrinal position on stealing. Conversely, if we lived in a society where homosexuality was consistently condemned as wrong, we would probably not include a statement about it, as we have in ours.

The Articles of Faith are a weighty document, for we are fully convinced in our own mind that they are an accurate representation of what the Bible teaches. Therefore, to go against these positions would violate our conscience. Thus agreement to these positions is essential within our local church, otherwise we will not be able to function together without violating someone’s conscience.

By contrast, our *Faith in Practice* has room for more flexibility. It spells out some details how we wish to put what we believe the Bible teaches into practice. Take the Lord’s Supper as an illustration. On the one hand, our Articles of Faith declare that we believe God has commanded us to observe this ordinance. Not to do so would be a violation of our conscience. On the other hand, our *Faith in Practice* may spell out whether we will have it quarterly, weekly, or annually, none of which would be a violation of our conscience.

# ARTICLES OF FAITH

## Article I. The Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit, and inerrant in the original writings.<sup>a</sup>

2. Therefore the Scriptures are the supreme and final authority for all matters of faith and conduct.<sup>b</sup> They are the standard by which the declarations and writings of men should be tested, and accordingly either accepted or rejected.<sup>c</sup>

3. We believe in the eternal preservation of God's Word<sup>d</sup> and accept faithful copies and translations of the Bible to be the trustworthy and authoritative Word of God.<sup>e</sup>

4. The meaning of Scripture is to be found by applying the literal-grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Isa.55:10-11; Mt.5:18; II Tim.3:16-17;

II Pet.1:20-21

<sup>b</sup> Ps.119:160; Pro.30:5

<sup>c</sup> Acts 17:11; I Cor.2:13-15; I Jn.4:1

<sup>d</sup> Ps.119:89; Is.40:8; Mk.13:31

<sup>e</sup> II Chron.34:21; Mt.22:31

<sup>f</sup> Dt.29:4; Jn.7:17; I Cor.2:6-15;

I Jn.2:20

## Article II. The Triune God

1. There is one living and true God – One alone.<sup>g</sup>

2. God is Spirit<sup>h</sup> and exists eternally in three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>i</sup> Though distinct in identity and function, they are one in purpose and substance, sharing the same divine nature.<sup>j</sup> They are equally worthy of honor, obedience, and worship.<sup>k</sup>

3. God is the Creator of all things.<sup>l</sup> He made the universe out of nothing by His spoken word in six literal twenty-four hour days.<sup>m</sup>

4. God is holy and perfect in all His attributes.<sup>n</sup>

<sup>g</sup> Dt.6:4; Isa.45:5-7; I Cor.8:4

<sup>h</sup> Jn.4:24

<sup>i</sup> Mt.28:19; II Cor.13:14

<sup>j</sup> Jn.10:30

<sup>k</sup> Jn.5:21-23, 14:16, 15:26, 16:7; Acts 5:3-4

<sup>l</sup> Gen.1; Isa.45:12&18; Eph.3:9; Col.3:16

<sup>m</sup> Gen.1; Ex.20:11; Ps.33:6, 148:1-5;

Heb.11:3

<sup>n</sup> Ex.34:6-7; Ps.147:5; Isa.6:3; Jn.1:14;

I Jn.1:5, 4:8; Rev.4:8-11, 5:8-14

<sup>o</sup> Ps.2:7; Jn.3:16, 8:19

<sup>p</sup> Jn.1:12-13; Rom.10:9; Gal.3:26

<sup>q</sup> Ps.103:19; Dan.4:35; Isa. 46:9-11;

Eph.1-11

<sup>r</sup> I Jn.4:8-10; Acts 14:17; Eph.2:4

James 5:11

<sup>s</sup> Mic.5:2; Jn.1:1, 8:58; Heb.13:8

<sup>t</sup> Jn.1:3; Col.1:16-17; Heb.1:2-3

<sup>u</sup> Jn.1:1-2&14; Lk.1:35

<sup>v</sup> Dt.18:15; Heb.3:1, 10:10-14;

Ps.2:6&10-12, 110:1

### A. God the Father

1. God the Father is in a unique sense the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son,<sup>o</sup> and He is the Father of all those who accept Jesus Christ as their own Lord and Savior.<sup>p</sup>

2. God is sovereign, thus His will is always accomplished.<sup>q</sup>

3. God is love, causing Him to act with benevolence, mercy, and compassion toward mankind.<sup>r</sup>

### B. God the Son

1. The Second Person of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, has existed from all eternity as God.<sup>s</sup> All things were created and are sustained by Him.<sup>t</sup>

2. Jesus became a man, being born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. By His incarnation He took on complete human nature, while giving up none of His divine essence, either in degree or kind.<sup>u</sup> This qualifies Him to serve as the promised Prophet, the Great High Priest, and the Sovereign King.<sup>v</sup>

3. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life here on earth.<sup>a</sup> Then He voluntarily laid down His life as a representative, substitutionary, and propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He was raised from the dead, proving that the priestly sacrifice of His blood had been accepted by the Father and full atonement had been made.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> I Pet.1:19; Heb.4:15, 7:28

4. Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Lev.5:5-6&10, 17:11; Rom.4:25

<sup>c</sup> Acts 1:9-10; Heb.7:25, 9:24;

Rom.8:34; I Jn.2:1-2

<sup>d</sup> Jn.10:7-9, 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Tim.2:5

5. Jesus Christ is man's only way to God.<sup>d</sup>

### C. God the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity,<sup>e</sup> eternally equal with God the Father and God the Son, and of the same nature.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>e</sup> I Cor.2:10-13; Eph.4:30; I Cor.12:11

<sup>f</sup> Mt.28:19; II Cor.13:14

2. The Holy Spirit assisted in the great works of God – in creating the universe,<sup>g</sup> in giving men God's written Word,<sup>h</sup> in the virgin birth of Christ,<sup>i</sup> and in empowering Christ throughout His earthly life.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>g</sup> Gen.1:2

<sup>h</sup> II Pet.1:20-21

<sup>i</sup> Mt.1:18

<sup>j</sup> Lk.4:1&18; Mt.12:28

3. The Holy Spirit initiated this present church age with His personal coming,<sup>k</sup> and in forming the Church, the body of Christ.<sup>l</sup> The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment,<sup>m</sup> regenerates those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>n</sup> and makes them members of the church.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>k</sup> Acts 1:4-5, 2:4, 11:15

<sup>l</sup> I Cor.12:12-13

<sup>m</sup> Jn.16:8

4. At the same time, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in these believers<sup>p</sup> and He becomes the seal and guarantor of their salvation until the day of their redemption.<sup>q</sup> He gives each believer spiritual gifts for the edification of the saints in order that they might build up the body of Christ.<sup>r</sup>

<sup>n</sup> Ezek.36:26-27; Jn.3:5-8; Tit.3:5

<sup>o</sup> I Cor.12:12-13

<sup>p</sup> Rom.8:9&13-14

<sup>q</sup> Eph.1:13-14, 4:30

<sup>r</sup> I Cor.12:1-11; Eph.4:11-16

### Article III. The Creation of Man and His Fall

1. God created man in the image of God, according to the likeness of God. God created him directly apart from any process of evolution. He gave man dominion over all the animals He had made and over all the earth.<sup>s</sup>

<sup>s</sup> Gen.1:26-28, 2:7; Mt.19:4

2. Man was originally created without sin. But when Satan tempted Adam and Eve, the first people, to transgress the law God had given them, they chose to disobey God and ate the fruit He had forbidden.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>t</sup> Gen.1:31, 2:16-17, 3:1-6

3. In Adam's sin every member of the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God, and is therefore under the just condemnation of God. The penalty for sin is both spiritual and physical death.<sup>u</sup>

<sup>u</sup> Gen.3:1-6; Ps.51:5, 58:3;

Rom.3:10-19&23, 5:8-10&12&19  
Eph.2:1-3; Gal.3:22

4. Man is utterly unable to present or do any good which would make him acceptable to God. Man can do nothing to save himself or help himself out of his sinful condition. It is only by the gracious work of God that man can be saved from the consequences of his sin.<sup>v</sup>

<sup>v</sup> Isa. 64:6-7; Eph.2:8-9; Tit.3:4-5

## Article IV. Salvation

1. Despite the sinfulness of man, God mercifully loves and desires all men to be saved.<sup>a</sup> Salvation is the free gift of God's grace.<sup>b</sup> It is neither merited nor secured, in part or whole, by any initiative, virtue, or work of man.<sup>c</sup>

2. Salvation is based solely on the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>d</sup> As our Great High Priest, He brought His own blood before God to atone for our sin.<sup>e</sup> It is the only payment for sins God will accept. Christ died as our Representative and Substitute,<sup>f</sup> in order to appease the wrath of God and to satisfy His righteous demand that the wages of sin be paid.<sup>g</sup>

3. To be saved God calls upon men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>h</sup> and to repent of their sins.<sup>i</sup> These are accomplished in the heart of man by God<sup>j</sup> and never happen apart from each other in genuine salvation.

4. When man places his faith in Christ, God grants him the forgiveness of all sin,<sup>k</sup> redemption, justification,<sup>l</sup> reconciliation with God,<sup>m</sup> the new birth, eternal life,<sup>n</sup> union with Christ,<sup>o</sup> and adoption as a son of God.<sup>p</sup>

5. Apart from Christ there is no salvation possible.<sup>q</sup>

## Article V. The Sovereignty of God and the Responsibility of Man

1. God is sovereign in the universe, for He created and owns it.<sup>r</sup> God has decreed all things that come to pass for His own glory.<sup>s</sup> In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor the approver of sin,<sup>t</sup> nor does His sovereignty diminish the responsibility of moral, intelligent creatures.<sup>u</sup>

2. Since man cannot and will not come to Christ on his own,<sup>v</sup> God Himself initiated the plan of salvation for men and graciously chose those whom He would have as His own.<sup>w</sup> By the preaching of the Gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, God calls men to salvation<sup>x</sup> through faith in Christ and repentance from sin.<sup>y</sup> Jesus Christ promised to receive any one who comes to Him.<sup>z</sup> Those who do come God adopts as His sons and He becomes their Father.<sup>aa</sup> Man's refusal to repent and believe merit just condemnation by a holy God.<sup>bb</sup>

3. God works in believers to will and to do His good pleasure. Yet He appeals to them to rest on His sovereign Providence and to yield themselves to Him.<sup>cc</sup>

## Article VI. Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security

1. It is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit of God to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation.<sup>dd</sup> This assurance is based on the testimony of God's Word,<sup>ee</sup> the testimony of God's work in their life<sup>ff</sup> and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>gg</sup>

2. All those who have been born of God are guarded and protected by His power and are thus secure in Christ forever.<sup>hh</sup> However, the Word of God clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh.<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ezek.18:23&31-32; I Tim.2:4; II Pet.3:9

<sup>b</sup> Rom.6:23; Eph.2:8-9

<sup>c</sup> Jn.6:28-29; Rom.4:4-5, 5:6; I Jn.4:10&19

<sup>d</sup> Lev.17:11; Heb.9:22, 10:5-10; Rom.3:24

<sup>e</sup> Heb.9:24-26

<sup>f</sup> II Cor.5:21; I Pet.2:24

<sup>g</sup> Lev.17:11; Isa.53:4-11; Rom.2:5-12, 3:21-26, 6:23, 12:19; Gal.3:13; Heb.9:22

<sup>h</sup> Jn.1:12, 3:16; Rom.10:9-10

<sup>i</sup> Mk.1:15; Lk.24:46-47;

Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 5:31, 17:30-31

<sup>j</sup> Lk.1:16-17; Acts 26:17-18; Jer.31:18

Lam.5:21; Acts 5:31; II Tim.2:25;

Eph.2:8; Phil.1:29

<sup>k</sup> Col.2:13-14; I Jn.1:7

<sup>l</sup> Rom.3:24-25; Eph.1:7

<sup>m</sup> Rom.5:10

<sup>n</sup> Jn.1:12-13, 3:16; Tit.3:4-5; I Jn.5:11-12

<sup>o</sup> I Cor.1:29-31

<sup>p</sup> Jn.1:12; Rom.8:14-17

<sup>q</sup> Jn.14:6; Acts 4:12, 13:39

<sup>r</sup> Gen.17:1; Amos 4:13

<sup>s</sup> Pro.16:4; Rom.11:36; Eph.1:11

<sup>t</sup> Hab.1:13; James 1:13

<sup>u</sup> Rom.9:18-21; Col.3:12; I Pet.1:17

<sup>v</sup> Jn.6:44&65; Rom.8:7-8; I Cor.2:14

<sup>w</sup> Jn.15:16; Rom.8:28-30; Eph.1:3-6;

II Thess.2:13

<sup>x</sup> Acts 13:48

<sup>y</sup> Acts 16:31, 17:30

<sup>z</sup> Jn.6:37&44

<sup>aa</sup> Rom.8:15; Gal.4:5

<sup>bb</sup> Lk.13:1-5; Jn.3:19&36

<sup>cc</sup> Phil.2:12-13; Rom.12:1-2

<sup>dd</sup> Jn.5:24; II Tim.1:12; Heb.10:22

<sup>ee</sup> I Jn.5:11-13

<sup>ff</sup> Rom.8:14; I Jn.3:6&14-15, 4:7-8

<sup>gg</sup> Rom.8:15-16

<sup>hh</sup> Jn.6:37-40, 10:27-30; Rom.8:1&38-39;

I Cor.1:4-8; I Pet.1:5

<sup>ii</sup> Rom.8:12-13, 13:13-14; Gal.5:13;

Tit.2:11-15

## Article VII. Sanctification

1. God has purposed to conform every believer to the image of Jesus Christ<sup>a</sup> – wholly devoted to God and wholly separated from sin. This transformation is known as sanctification and occurs in three stages.

<sup>a</sup> Rom.8:29; Eph.1:4

2. Firstly, every believer is sanctified unto God because God has purchased him to be His possession.<sup>b</sup> Therefore, He also calls him holy and regards him as a saint.<sup>c</sup> This aspect of sanctification is completed at the moment of salvation.<sup>d</sup> At the same time, God creates in the believer a new nature which is made after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>b</sup> I Cor.1:2, 6:19-20; Heb.10:10

<sup>c</sup> Heb.3:1, 6:10

<sup>d</sup> Heb.10:10&14

<sup>e</sup> Eph.4:24

3. Secondly, in spite of the new nature in the believer, tendencies to sin still remain in him. These are in constant conflict with the new nature.<sup>f</sup> This battle continues until the end of life on earth.<sup>g</sup> The process of sanctification requires removing sinful thoughts, words, and deeds and replacing them with Christ-like conduct.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Rom.7:13-25; Gal.5:16-23

<sup>g</sup> I Jn.1:8&10

<sup>h</sup> Rom.8:12-13, 12:1-2; Eph.4:22-23

4. This transformation is accomplished by the Holy Spirit as the believer counts on his identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.<sup>i</sup> Sanctification is not accomplished by man through the law, but by faith in Christ.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Rom.6:1-13

<sup>j</sup> Gal.2:19-21; II Cor.3:18; Col.3:1-5;

I Thess.4:3-4; Heb.10:14

5. Thirdly, the process of sanctification will be completed when the believer enters the presence of Jesus Christ.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>k</sup> Phil.1:6, 3:21; I Thess.5:23-24;

I Jn.3:2

6. Although sanctification is a work of God, man is under obligation to constantly grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>l</sup> to pursue holiness and righteousness in all aspects of life,<sup>m</sup> and to increasingly show forth Christ's glorious virtues in our daily living, led and energized by His Holy Spirit.<sup>n</sup>

<sup>l</sup> Phil.3:10-14; II Pet.1:5-11, 3:18

<sup>m</sup> Heb.12:14; I Pet.1:13-16; Rom.14:17-19

<sup>n</sup> Rom.8:14; II Cor.3:18

7. God's children should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Lord and Savior. God commands all believers to separate themselves from all religious apostasy and from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor.6:14-7:1;

II Tim.3:1-5; I Jn.2:15-17;

II Jn.9-11

## Article VIII. The Church

### A. The Universal Church

1. The true church is the Body of Christ, a living organism formed by God<sup>p</sup> to be His temple.<sup>q</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ is both the Head and the Cornerstone of the church.<sup>r</sup> The church is also described as the bride of Christ.<sup>s</sup> She is made up of all born-again persons of the church age.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>p</sup> Mt.16:18; I Cor.6:15, 12:12-13

<sup>q</sup> I Cor.3:16; Eph.2:20-22; I Pet.2:4-5

<sup>r</sup> Col.1:18; Eph.2:19-20

<sup>s</sup> Eph.5:25-27

<sup>t</sup> Eph.1:22-23

### B. The Local Church

1. The New Testament Scriptures clearly teach and define the establishing of local churches throughout this age.<sup>u</sup> The local church is to be made up of redeemed individuals who have been led by God to join together.<sup>v</sup>

<sup>u</sup> Acts 14:27, 20:17&28; Rom.16:1;

I Tim.3; Tit.1:5-11

<sup>v</sup> Acts 2:42; Heb.10:25

### C. The Purpose of the Church

1. The ultimate purpose of the church is to give glory to God.<sup>a</sup> She gives glory to God by submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ out of love and by obeying His Word.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eph.1:6&12&14

<sup>b</sup> Jn.14:15&23-24

2. The immediate purposes of the church are to give glory to God by

a) worshiping Him together,<sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Jn.4:21-23; Eph.5:19-21

b) cultivating fellowship with one another,<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Acts 2:42

c) discipling one another toward Christlikeness,<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> I Cor.3:9-13; Col.3:16; I Tim.1:3-5;  
II Tim.2:1-2

d) equipping and encouraging believers to minister God's grace to one another,<sup>f</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Eph.4:11-16; I Pet.4:10-11

e) equipping and encouraging one another to evangelize the lost,<sup>g</sup>

<sup>g</sup> Mt.28:29-30; Lk.24:46-48; Acts 1:8

f) and proclaiming and guarding the Truth God has entrusted to her.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>h</sup> I Tim.3:15; Phil.2:16; Jude 3

### D. The Structure of the Church

1. Jesus Christ is the Head and the Chief Shepherd of the church.<sup>i</sup> He directs and guides His church using the Bible and under-shepherds, whom He gives to the local churches.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Eph.4:15-16; I Pet.5:4

<sup>j</sup> Acts 20:28

2. God's under-shepherds, also called elders, or overseers, are men who must possess certain spiritual qualifications.<sup>k</sup> As leaders of the local church, they must be examples to the flock as those who will give an account.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>k</sup> I Tim.3:1-7; Tit.1:5-9; I Pet.5:1-4

<sup>l</sup> II Tim.2:24; Heb.13:7&17

3. It is the responsibility of each member of the local church to be in submission to their God-given leaders, even as unto the Lord.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>m</sup> Rom.13:1-2

4. As needed, the church shall also choose faithful men who meet the qualifications of a deacon.<sup>n</sup> Deacons are appointed to help meet the physical needs of the church and to assist the elders so they can focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>n</sup> Acts 6:1-6; I Tim.3:8-10&12-13

<sup>o</sup> Acts 6:4; I Tim.4:6&12-16

5. The New Testament shows that the local church is autonomous under the Lord Jesus Christ. The local church has the right of self-government, free of any interference from any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. The one and only head is the Lord Jesus Christ.

### E. The Ordinances of the Church

1. The Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed by the church until His return.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>p</sup> Mt.28:19-20; I Cor.11:23-26

2. Baptism is a one-time public testimony by the one being baptized that he has personally accepted Jesus Christ as his own Lord and Savior and is committed to walk in the newness of life by the Spirit.<sup>q</sup> Baptism is not a means of salvation but is an act of obedience. Christian baptism symbolizes the union of the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

<sup>q</sup> Rom.6:3-6, 8:14; I Pet.3:21

3. The Lord's Supper is a service conducted regularly in obedience to the will of our Lord.<sup>a</sup> This service is only for believers who are not living in unrepentant sin.<sup>b</sup> By participating, each Christian remembers the broken body and the shed blood of Christ, proclaims the death of Christ, and anticipates the glories of Christ's coming kingdom.<sup>c</sup> He also declares his union with Christ and his unity and fellowship with fellow believers.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> I Cor.11:24-25

<sup>b</sup> I Cor.11:17-34

<sup>c</sup> I Cor.11:26; Mt.26:29

<sup>d</sup> I Cor.10:16-17

#### F. The Discipline of the Church

1. The New Testament teaches the importance of discipleship,<sup>e</sup> mutual accountability of all believers to each other,<sup>f</sup> as well as the need for discipline of sinning members in the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Mt.28:19-20; Gal.6:1-2; II Tim.2:2

<sup>f</sup> Mt.18:5-14; Rom.13:8, 14:19; Eph.5:21; Heb.10:24

<sup>g</sup> Mt.18:15-22; Rom.16:17-18; I Cor.5:1-13; II Thess.3:6-15; I Tim.1:19-20; Tit.1:10-16; II Jn.9-11

#### Article IX. Marriage

1. God instituted marriage for the good of all mankind when He presented Eve to Adam, and ordained that there be but one man and one woman in marriage.<sup>h</sup> It is established on the basis of their mutual covenant of loyalty to each other declared in their marriage vows, to which God is the highest Witness.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>h</sup> Gen.1:27-28, 2:20-24; Eph.5:31

<sup>i</sup> Pro.2:17; Mal.2:14

2. Sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between a man and a woman within the love and bonds of marriage. Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual intimacy is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>j</sup> Ex.20:14; Lev.18:22, 20:13; Dt.22:13-30; Rom.1:26-27; I Cor.6:9-10; Eph.5:5-6

3. The marriage covenant is binding as long as both live, for God commanded that Adam should cling to his wife.<sup>k</sup> He further declared that He hates divorce<sup>l</sup> and that no man should separate that which God has united in marriage.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>k</sup> Gen.2:24

<sup>l</sup> Mal.2:16

<sup>m</sup> Mt.5:32,19:3-9; Mk.10:11-12; Lk.16:18; I Cor.7:10-11

4. Believers entering marriage are to do so in harmony with God's Word. They are both to be "in the Lord"; therefore, the marrying of a believer to an unbeliever is unscriptural.<sup>n</sup> They are to marry in accordance with regulations set by the state.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>n</sup> II Cor.6:14; I Cor.7:39

<sup>o</sup> Rom.13:1

#### Article X. Civil Government

1. God instituted human government and He has given it the responsibility and authority to reward those who do good and to justly punish those who do evil.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>p</sup> Gen.9:4-6; Lev.22:17-22; Rom.13:1-7; I Pet.2:13-14

<sup>q</sup> Acts 5:28-29

<sup>r</sup> Tit.3:1-2; Lk.22:25-27

<sup>s</sup> Mt.22:15-22

2. God calls people to live in subjection to civil government, abiding by its laws in all ways that do not oppose the law of God.<sup>q</sup> This includes showing respect and honor to those in authority, living peaceably in all humility,<sup>r</sup> and paying our taxes, even as our Lord Jesus did.<sup>s</sup>

<sup>t</sup> I Tim.2:1-3

3. God exhorts believers to pray faithfully for kings and for all who are in authority.<sup>t</sup>

## Article XI. The Sanctity of Human Life

1. Human life begins at conception and the unborn child is a living human being, worthy and deserving of all the rights and privileges of personhood.<sup>a</sup> Therefore, to take the life of an unborn child is forbidden as murder.

<sup>a</sup> Job 3:16; Ps.51:5, 139:13-16;  
Jer.20:15-18; Lk.1:44

2. God alone has the right to terminate life.<sup>b</sup> Therefore, any form of euthanasia is equally forbidden as murder.

<sup>b</sup> Ex.20:13

3. In order to protect the sanctity of human life, God has given the government the power of the sword.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Gen.9:4-6; Rom.13:1-7

## Article XII. The Doctrine of Last Things

1. The church age began with the coming of the Holy Spirit as reported in Acts 2 and will end with the coming of Christ to translate His bride, the church, to be with Him in His Father's house.<sup>d</sup> This coming of our Lord is imminent and we are taught to eagerly expect His coming.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Jn.14:1-3; I Cor.15:51-53; I Thess.4:13-18

<sup>e</sup> Phil.3:20, 4:5; Tit.2:13; James 5:8

2. Israel has a special role in God's plan for the future of human history. Many of the unconditional promises God made to the nation Israel have not been fulfilled nor have they been nullified by Israel's disobedience nor has the church replaced Israel in God's plan. The Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants will be fulfilled as promised to Israel.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Gen.13:15, 15:1-21, 17:4-8 & 13 & 19,  
22:18, 48:4; Dt.30:1-10; I Chron.17:1-15;  
II Chron.20:7; Ps.37:29, 105:9-11;  
Jer.31:31-34; Rom.11

3. God will prepare Israel for the fulfillment of these promises in a period of Great Tribulation unequalled in her history.<sup>g</sup> During this time, He will also pour out His righteous judgments upon an unbelieving world.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>g</sup> Jer.30:7-9; Dan.9:24-27, 12:1; Mt.24:21

<sup>h</sup> Mt.24:29-31, 25:31-34

4. The promises to Israel will be fulfilled finally and completely when Christ Himself returns to earth as conquering King "with power and great glory."<sup>i</sup> He will judge the wicked with the sword of His mouth and establish His literal Kingdom on earth with the righteous. Thus He will reign over the whole earth from the throne of David in Jerusalem.<sup>j</sup> Every knee will bow before Him, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Rev.19:11-16

<sup>j</sup> Isa.2:2-4; Jer.3:17; Dan.7:13-14;  
Micah 4:1-8; Zech.2:11, 8:20-23, 14:1-4;  
Rev.1:7, 11:15, 19:11-21, 20:1-6  
Mt.26:64

<sup>k</sup> Phil.2:10-11; Rev.20:1-6

5. Every person who dies will one day live again and will spend eternity in either heaven or hell.<sup>l</sup> Those who believe in Christ will enjoy perfect happiness in His presence forever and receive rewards in accordance with their faithful service on earth.<sup>m</sup> All unbelievers will appear before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their deeds.<sup>n</sup> They will suffer conscious torment away from the presence of Christ in the lake of fire forever.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>l</sup> Dan.12:2; Mt.25:31-46; Jn.5:28-29;  
Heb.9:27

<sup>m</sup> Mt.24:45-47, 25:21-23; Rom.8:18;  
I Cor.2:9, 3:12-15; Rev.22:5

<sup>n</sup> Rev.20:11-15

<sup>o</sup> Mt.13:41-42; Mk.9:47-48; Lk.12:5, 16:24;  
II Thess.1:5-10; Rev.14:11, 20:10 & 15

# FAITH IN PRACTICE

## Introduction

Our Lord admonishes the believers and the churches to let all things be done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40). Since it is necessary that every organized body have certain rules and regulations, this church adopts the following *Faith in Practice*, whereby we seek to conduct ourselves according to the Holy Scriptures.

## SECTION 1. NAME

According to its Articles of Incorporation, the name of this church is: CrossWay Bible Church, located in Elbing, Butler County, Kansas.

## SECTION 2. DISTINCTIVES

Our name is descriptive of who we are. In line with the early church (Acts 24:14) and faithful believers through the centuries, “CrossWay” indicates our firm conviction that Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). It is our desire to deny ourselves, and take up his cross daily, and follow Him (Luke 9:23-26).

“Bible” is likewise significant. We are unwavering in our commitment to the accuracy and the authority of God’s Word. We search the Scriptures in order to know God (Acts 17:11) and be obedient to His directives (James 1:22).

“Church” signifies that we believe this is God’s work, not merely a human organization. We are a local assembly of believers who desire to stir one another up to love and good works (Heb. 10:24) in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and worship. For a detailed statement of our doctrinal position see our *Articles of Faith*.

## SECTION 3. PURPOSE

The ultimate purpose of CrossWay Bible Church is to give glory to God. We give glory to God by submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ out of love and by obeying His Word.

The immediate purposes of this church are to give glory to God by

- 1) worshiping Him together,
- 2) cultivating fellowship with one another,
- 3) discipling one another toward Christlikeness,
- 4) equipping and encouraging believers to minister God’s grace to one another,
- 5) equipping and encouraging one another to evangelize the lost,
- 6) and proclaiming and guarding the Truth God has entrusted to her.

## SECTION 4. ELDERS

### **General Principles**

Jesus Christ is the head of His body, the church. All human authority at CrossWay Bible Church shall be subject to His sovereign authority and the directives in His Word. As the Chief Shepherd, He has given elders to the local church. It is their responsibility to shepherd and oversee the flock of which they are a part. It is the purpose of CrossWay to willingly submit to the leadership of its elders, whom God has lovingly placed in a position of authority.

While elders serve as under-shepherds, they also remain sheep in God's flock. They are not infallible and they retain the potential to err, both in doctrine and in conduct, as all sheep do. Godly elders recognize their own need for accountability. They also recognize that God has given spiritual gifts, abilities, and wisdom to each church member for the edification of the body. Thus it is the purpose of CrossWay to organize itself in a way that gives the congregation the opportunity for input in various decisions, including the elder selection process. There shall also be an established procedure for the church to deal with an errant elder or elders, should the need arise.

### **Definition**

The elder board at CrossWay shall be comprised of lay elders and the pastor(s). They shall all equally be elders. In this document, the terms "elder(s)" and "elder board" are used to refer to both the lay elders and the pastor(s).

### **Authority**

CrossWay Bible Church shall be led by its elder board under the headship of Jesus Christ. The elders shall directly or indirectly oversee every aspect of church life. They will serve as the final decision-making body in the church, especially in matters that pertain to the spiritual well-being of the church. If division should arise between individuals at CrossWay, either in doctrine or in matters of preference, the church shall strive to submit to its elders, supporting their decisions in order to maintain and strengthen the unity of the fellowship.

It is critical that the elders, after sufficient prayer, base their decisions on Scriptural insight, the individual and corporate leading of the Holy Spirit, input from the body, and carefully assembled facts. The elders shall obtain input from the congregation by whatever means they believe is the most appropriate for the situation they are dealing with. They may choose to seek input and guidance from the body by calling for either a binding or a non-binding vote. This shall be the normal procedure in major decisions, such as, but not limited to, appointing an elder, making a significant financial commitment, or changing our written documents.

The elders shall oversee the affairs of the church not as those lording it over those entrusted to them, but being examples to the flock.

## **Qualifications**

Only men who meet the Scriptural qualifications of an elder, who wholeheartedly agree with and support the *Articles of Faith* of CrossWay Bible Church, who will gladly abide by our *Faith in Practice*, and who desire to be an elder shall be eligible to serve on the elder board. The Scriptural qualifications found in I Tim. 3, Tit. 1, and I Pet. 5 include being:

1. *Blameless* – above reproach, cannot be legitimately accused of unconfessed sin.
2. *Husband of one wife* – a one-woman man, devoted to sexual purity.
3. *Temperate* – sober-minded, clear-headed.
4. *Self-controlled* – orderly.
5. *Respectable* – has a good reputation.
6. *Hospitable* – makes others, including strangers, feel welcome.
7. *Able to teach* – the ability and willingness to teach sound doctrine and refute false doctrine.
8. *Not given to wine* – not controlled by an addiction.
9. *Not violent* – not quick-tempered, gentle in all relationships.
10. *Not quarrelsome* – not argumentative or contentious
11. *Not greedy for money* – not desiring to be rich, not pursuing dishonest gain.
12. *Manages his own household well* – submissive, faithful children.
13. *Not a novice* – not new to or immature in the faith.
14. *Has a good reputation with outsiders* – known as a godly man even by the unsaved.
15. *One who loves what is good, upright, and holy* – desires that which is godly and wholesome.
16. *One who holds firm to the faithful word* – not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

## **Selection**

The Scripture states that elders in the church are given by God. The task of the people in the church is to recognize and appoint the men God has given them to be their elders. The following steps will be used at CrossWay to accomplish this goal.

With the above qualifications firmly in mind, any member of CrossWay Bible Church may submit a potential nominee for elder to the elder board. These potential nominees will be interviewed and prayerfully considered by the elder board. If so led by the Holy Spirit, the elder board shall then nominate one man to be appointed as elder.

After a period of prayer and consideration, during which any concern(s) about the nominee should be submitted in writing to the elder board, the congregation may recognize and appoint the nominee to be an elder with a 3/4's majority vote. This vote shall usually take place at CrossWay's annual congregational meeting. However, the elder board may initiate the selection process at any time it deems it wise to do so.

## **Number**

The Bible teaches a plurality of elders. Providing enough qualified men are available, the elder board at CrossWay shall consist of up to five (5) lay elders and the pastor(s).

## **Organization**

The elders shall appoint, from among themselves, a Board Chairman and a Secretary on an annual basis, shortly after the annual congregational meeting. The Board Chairman shall preside over all board meetings and congregational meetings. Should he be unable to attend such a meeting, he shall appoint another elder to act in his absence. The Secretary shall ensure that the appropriate minutes are kept at every board meeting and congregational meeting. The secretary is also charged with keeping an up-to-date copy of the *CrossWay Articles of Faith, Faith in Practice, and Church Fellowship Covenant*.

## **Decisions**

Every elder is considered “one among equals” in the decision-making process on the elder board. Decisions will only be considered made when there is unanimous consent among the elders. When such is not the case, the matter will be committed to further prayer, study of the Scriptures, and deliberation.

## **Tenure**

Lay elders will be appointed to a five (5) year term with one lay elder rotating off each year. Lay elders shall not serve consecutive terms. There shall be no restrictions on the term length of the pastor(s), although a non-binding “vote of affirmation” shall be conducted by the congregation every three years.

An elder may terminate his service and responsibilities as an elder at any time. He should do so prayerfully and only after seeking counsel from the elder board.

An elder who becomes physically or mentally incapable of fulfilling his responsibilities, who disqualifies himself spiritually, or whose service is no longer in the best interest of the church, may be removed from this office by the unanimous action of the remaining elders.

If members of CrossWay believe an individual elder or the elder board is living in unrepentant sin or is leading the church to act in a way that is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, they shall follow the procedure in Mt.18:15-17 and I Tim.5:19-20. The first step is to discuss the sin or deviation from Biblical teaching with the individual elder or the elder board. If the initial confrontation does not bring about repentance, then witnesses shall establish the truth of the original accusation. If, after following the above procedure, the facts have been established and repentance has not occurred, then 25% of the church members may call for a congregational meeting where the issues will be presented and ruled on by a simple majority vote of the congregation.

## **Responsibilities**

The responsibility of the elders is to shepherd and oversee the flock of God at CrossWay. This necessitates that the elders will:

1. Maintain a close, personal walk with the Lord themselves.
2. Give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.
3. Guard and protect the flock with sound doctrine.
4. Oversee the spiritual direction of the church.
5. Make sure all programs and activities accomplish the objectives and goals of the church.
6. Evaluate the teachers, preachers, and the written material CrossWay uses.

7. Become acquainted with and counsel those who desire to join the church.
8. Seek to identify and develop faithful men to teach the Word.
9. Counsel and warn those who are erring.
10. Provide leadership when church discipline is necessary.
11. Comfort the poor, the sick, and the bereaved.
12. Seek the Lord's wisdom in applying our *Articles of Faith* and *Faith in Practice*.
13. Strive to maintain open communication with the flock.
14. Cooperate and submit mutually to the other elders.
15. Ensure that any need that arises at CrossWay is properly addressed.

*And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

I Peter 5:5

## **SECTION 5. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Purpose**

Membership gives opportunity for the local church to affirm an individual Christian's profession of faith.

Membership also serves the purpose of clarifying the desire and intent of a believer to identify with and to submit to this local body of Christ known as CrossWay Bible Church.

Membership assists the Elders to know which individuals they are accountable to God for, as they carry out their responsibilities to pray for, teach, counsel, and discipline within the local body of believers.

### **Eligibility**

To be a member of a local church is a privilege and an honor. There are certain prerequisites that must be met to be eligible for membership at CrossWay Bible Church:

1. This person shall give testimony of his salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. He shall give evidence of his desire to follow the Lord by believer's baptism and a godly lifestyle.
3. He shall have completed our membership class, giving the elder(s) the opportunity to become acquainted with him and review his eligibility for membership.
4. He shall express agreement with our *Articles of Faith* and a willingness to abide by our *Faith in Practice* by signing *CrossWay's Fellowship Covenant*.

### **Responsibilities**

Membership involves a mutual commitment between the individual members of this local body of believers. Members shall commit themselves to helping the body to grow to maturity by using their spiritual gifts. Responsibilities include:

1. To watch over one another in brotherly love.
2. To pray for one another.
3. To encourage one another.
4. To humbly correct one another.

5. To accept correction.
6. To aid one another in sickness and distress.
7. To be slow to take offense.
8. To regularly assemble with the local congregation.

### **Associate Membership**

We offer associate membership for those who would like to commit themselves to being a part of this church, and yet also sense a need to maintain their full membership at their home church. Persons who may qualify as associate members include individuals involved in full time Christian ministry, or those who because of schooling or work requirements are temporarily residing in our community, or similar situations.

Those wishing to be an associate member are required to meet the same prerequisites as those who apply for full membership. In addition, they shall provide the name and contact information of the church in which they hold full membership so we can notify that congregation of your relationship with us. Associate members commit themselves to being involved at CrossWay as their schedule permits.

### **Termination**

Members in good standing may withdraw their membership by their choice. Such shall leave with the blessing of CrossWay Bible Church and be encouraged to find another like-minded church to join as soon as possible.

Members may also forfeit their membership by non-involvement with the body. The elders will review the membership roll annually. If the individual appears to no longer be involved with the church, the elders will contact the individual to understand his situation and then respond with appropriate counsel and action.

Members under church discipline waive their right to withdraw their membership in the midst of the disciplinary process, for in so doing they avoid the God-given process that is to lead them to repentance and restoration. Under the leadership of the elders, the steps of church discipline will be fully implemented, unless repentance occurs first.

All members have equal right and interest in all church property. Since personal and real property cannot be divided, members who leave the church voluntarily, or who are expelled, lose all claim to all church property.

## **SECTION 6. ELECTED OFFICES**

Adopted February 1, 2015

### **Purpose**

As we have opportunity, it is the desire of CrossWay Bible Church to do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. It is the goal of this church to minister to the various needs of its members, and, as the Lord enables, in the local community and around the world.

Even as the early church organized itself by appointing certain men to accomplish specific tasks (Acts 6), so we choose to establish elected offices within our church in order to address particular needs.

### **Procedure**

CrossWay Bible Church will elect individuals to the following offices at its annual meeting. Individuals may volunteer or be nominated (with permission of the nominee) from the CrossWay membership prior to the annual meeting. These nominations should be given to one of the elders. To hold office an elected member must receive a majority of the votes cast (50% plus 1). The length of term for each office will be equal to the number of individuals or couples on the committee. The terms shall be staggered so only one vacancy occurs per committee each year. In the event of an unexpected vacancy, the elders may fill this vacancy by appointment. The person(s) rotating out of office will be eligible for reelection, if they so choose. All mixed committees will be led by a man.

### **Offices and Their Job Descriptions**

- A. TRUSTEES. This committee shall consist of three men. Their responsibilities include handling the church's money, ensuring that all church property is properly taken care of, and making the elders aware of any physical needs individual members may have. Any expenditures beyond routine operating expenses shall first be approved by the elders. Monies paid shall never exceed available funds. The trustees shall give a full account of all income and expenditures to the church at its annual meeting.
- B. EDUCATION COMMITTEE. This committee shall consist of a mixed group of three. In addition, one elder shall serve on this committee. Their responsibility is to oversee the teaching ministry of our church. This includes Sunday school and midweek classes. They shall provide teachers who are members of our church for each class. A non-member is permitted to teach only when specifically approved by the elders. The education committee is also charged with providing Biblically sound teaching material. Any change in curriculum must be approved by the elders.
- C. YOUTH LEADERS. This committee shall consist of two couples. Their responsibility is primarily to look out for the spiritual well-being of our young people. Encouraging the young people to walk with the Lord is to be the over-arching goal of every activity. Providing wholesome activities, personal interaction, Bible teaching, and opportunities for the young people to spend time together can all be used to draw our young people to the Lord.
- D. FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE. This committee shall consist of a mixed group of three. In addition, the spouse of any married fellowship committee member shall be permitted and encouraged to serve on this committee. Their responsibility is to promote sufficient opportunities for Christian fellowship in our church. They are also charged with helping when needed with special events at our church, such as a wedding or a funeral.

### **Worship Leader**

This position will not be elected, but will be filled by a man under the direct oversight of the elders. His responsibility is to plan and usually lead our Sunday morning worship for a term of 1 year. When possible, he will work with the pastor to coordinate this important service.

## SECTION 7: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Adopted May 20, 2015

### Introduction

Church discipline is the process whereby the members of a local church intentionally seek to instruct, encourage, and admonish one another to live their lives in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord. Most church discipline is *formative* in nature. It is to prevent sin before it happens.

*Corrective* church discipline becomes necessary when a fellow believer falls into sin. It then becomes our responsibility to warn the erring, call them to repentance, and, when necessary, even rebuke them publicly. As members of the same body, we mourn when one of our own falls into sin and we wish to restore him to a place of fellowship with our Lord and each other.

### Our Commitment

Biblical church discipline is an indispensable part of a healthy local church. CrossWay Bible Church desires to be a body of believers that is committed to helping each member of the body to grow to maturity (Col. 1:28). It is our desire to watch over one another in brotherly love and to humbly correct one another when necessary.

Christ desires a church that is “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27). Any member who brings reproach on the name of Christ and His church by sinful conduct or heretical teaching shall be subject to corrective discipline.

### Purposes of Church Discipline

Church discipline often calls us to exercise renewed faith – believing God’s way is the best way, even when it contradicts our own reasoning or popular opinions.

1. For the Benefit of the Person Being Disciplined

The goal of corrective discipline is always repentance and restoration. Even the final and most severe steps of church discipline are designed for the eternal well-being of the offender (I Cor. 5:4-5; Gal. 6:1).

2. For the Benefit of Fellow Believers

Corrective discipline administered properly acts as an admonition and a deterrent to other believers facing temptation (I Tim.5:20-21; Acts 5:11).

3. For the Benefit of the Church

A church that knowingly tolerates sinful conduct or false teaching in its midst is not pleasing to the Lord and in grave danger. Discipline works against the leaven-like nature of sin in the church body by rooting it out (Rev. 2:18-29; I Cor. 5:2&6).

4. For the Glory of God

The highest calling of the church is to bring glory to God. But tolerating sin within the church brings reproach on His name. God is honored when a church, in obedience to His Word, responds to sin with discipline (Eph. 1:1-14; I Pet. 2:9-12; II Cor. 9:13).

## Practical Guidelines

The following points will govern our implementation of church discipline, particularly corrective discipline:

1. Although CrossWay Bible Church is committed to exercising corrective discipline when needed, we do not actively search for opportunities to do so. Negative reports will only be considered accurate after the facts have been verified, "that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matt. 18:16). Members are to be assumed innocent until proven guilty.
2. According to the procedure given in Matthew 18, the goal of the disciplinary process is to involve as few people as necessary to bring about repentance and restoration. Most corrective discipline is and should be successfully completed one on one.
3. We will protect the individual and our church by not telling any more people than absolutely necessary about disciplinary cases in each step of the process. Gossip, even when disguised as a "prayer request," is never appropriate.
4. When the sinful conduct or false doctrine of a member requires it, CrossWay Bible Church will initiate and follow through with appropriate steps of corrective church discipline. Passages such as Mt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; II Thess. 3; I Tim. 5:19-20; II Tim. 2:24-26; Tit. 3:9-11; I John 2:19; II John 10-11 and Jude 22-23 shall be used to give direction in the process.
5. The elders shall lead when the disciplinary process moves beyond one or several people to telling the church, or when the offense is public knowledge.
6. Before reaching a decision on how to proceed, the elders shall diligently pray, seeking wisdom from God. They shall carefully assemble all relevant facts, including any pertinent Scripture, the nature of the offense, the history and present attitude of the offender, and the impact on the church and the Name of Christ. Only then shall the elders determine what the appropriate steps of discipline will be and how fast to move ahead.
7. The final steps of corrective discipline will likely be effective only as the church speaks with one voice (II Cor. 2:6). Thus, it is very important for the elders to inform, instruct, and lead the congregation in this process. When the elders determine the membership of an unrepentant member must be terminated and fellowship suspended, it is imperative for the congregation to follow the lead of its elders.
8. As soon as a proper attitude of repentance and spiritual commitment is evident the disciplinary process has reached its goal. At such time the elders shall joyfully lead in appropriate steps of reconciliation and restoring fellowship and membership.
9. Any dispute between believers, and especially between members of the same church, is to be settled among ourselves using Biblical principles and wise fellow believers, without involving secular courts (I Cor. 6:1-8).

10. By being a member of CrossWay Bible Church each person indicates his willingness to receive formative and corrective discipline. Thus neither CrossWay Bible Church, its elders, nor any other members shall be held liable for acting upon our written documents.

### **Church Discipline is Positive**

We believe that church discipline is a positive and loving thing to do. The church that allows its member(s) to live in unrepentant sin without consequence demonstrates that it does not truly care for the spiritual well-being of its members (Prov. 13:24).

Hebrews 12:5-11 teaches us that God Himself disciplines those whom He loves. Discipline is an indication that we truly are His children. In part, God wants to use the local church to administer His discipline. We choose to endure the temporary pain associated with discipline that we might gain the peaceful fruit of righteousness that comes thereby.

## **SECTION 8. CHILD AND YOUTH ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY**

Adopted February 1, 2016

### **Purpose**

This policy reflects the commitment of CrossWay Bible Church to protect the children and youth in our care from harm and abuse. We will diligently strive to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend any fellowship or ministry activity and we will not tolerate any type of abuse, especially toward our children and youth.

For the safety and protection of our children and workers, guidelines are necessary to maintain the ministry of our congregation as a safe place where we can trust one another. This policy not only protects the children and youth we are ministering to, but is also designed to prevent unfounded allegations of child/youth abuse. The format of these guidelines is also required by our insurance liability company.

### **Selecting and Screening Child/Youth Workers**

1. Every teacher, compensated and volunteer, must be a member "in good standing" of CrossWay Bible Church. All other helpers shall be under the direct oversight of a church member. Exceptions to this rule may be granted only on an individual basis by the elders for justifiable reasons.
2. Every child/youth worker is required to read this policy, sign a letter of understanding, and agree to comply with this policy. This shall be repeated biannually.
3. Every child/youth worker shall be screened by a background check at the expense of CrossWay Bible Church for the purpose of obtaining information regarding criminal and abuse history. Disqualifying offenses that will keep an individual from serving as a child/youth worker will be determined by the elders on a case by case basis in light of surrounding circumstances. However, convictions for an offense involving children will preclude someone from being permitted to serve in these roles. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction will also disqualify the individual. The results of these screenings will be kept confidential by authorized church staff.

## **Supervision of Child/Youth Workers**

### **1. General Guidelines**

- a. Every Sunday school, nursery, and office room shall have a window in the door. These windows shall remain uncovered to allow a clear view of all activities.
- b. Every effort will be made to have a minimum of two adults working together with children/youth. In a Bible Study or similar teaching environment, it is acceptable to have individual classes/groups with only one adult worker provided there are other adults present in the general area. No child/youth worker will meet alone with a child or youth for a private meeting without a parent or guardian's consent.
- c. It is recognized that certain counseling and pastoral situations may preclude the presence of two adult caregivers and that the general guidelines for the supervision of caregivers should not restrict situations where individual counsel and guidance is necessary. In this case, the door must be left open or the window of the door shall remain uncovered.
- d. Parents or guardians will be asked to bring pre-school children to their classrooms. If the worker is not in the room, parents or guardians should stay with the child(ren) until the worker arrives.
- e. Nursery: Normally, the only adults permitted in the nursery are parents or scheduled caregivers. At least one adult beyond high school age should be present in the nursery at all times when children are present unless the parent gives approval for a younger person.
- f. Overnight events that are attended by children or youth of both genders must be chaperoned by adult caregivers of both genders.
- g. CrossWay Bible Church will not store or dispense any medication to children/youth in our care. No medicine shall be given without specific instructions from the parent or guardian. A first aid kit is available in the church office.

### **2. Physical Contact Guidelines**

- a. Touch is an essential part of nurturing. Volunteers should be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, special needs and sexual development. Physical contact with children/youth should be age appropriate.
- b. There shall not be any kissing, extended hugging or inappropriate touching of any child or youth.
- c. Physical punishment shall never be used. All interactions regarding discipline must be done with the consideration of the person's dignity and self-esteem. Discipline is to be carried out through instruction, training and verbal correction. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words.
- d. Anyone working with youth should never pursue or engage in a dating relationship with the youth.

3. Bathroom Procedures
  - a. Parents or guardians are strongly encouraged to take their children to the bathroom prior to going to classrooms.
  - b. If at all possible, the volunteer should remain outside the bathroom door. If the child requires assistance, the volunteer should prop open the bathroom and/or the stall door while assisting the child.

### **Reporting Procedures**

1. All workers, compensated and volunteer, involved with children or youth (birth – 18 years) shall immediately report any suspicions or concerns that relate to child abuse (whether physical, emotional, or sexual abuse), inappropriate behavior, or child neglect to one of the elders. The incident should not be discussed with others. The report should be confidential and should include the reporting individual's observations, complaints, and suspicions.
2. If a child offers information, it should be taken seriously. The problem should not be denied. Emotional support should be given but the child should not be pressured for further details.
3. Specific behaviors to watch for include:
  - a. Inappropriate comments about sexual matters.
  - b. Use of pornography.
  - c. Excessive and inappropriate attention to a particular child/youth, especially a desire to be alone with a child/youth.
  - d. Any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or neglect. Examples include kissing, extended hugging, or inappropriate touching of any child/youth.
4. Any elder who receives an allegation of abuse or neglect shall immediately notify the entire elder board.
5. Confidentiality on these issues will be maintained to the greatest degree possible. However, CrossWay may have to disclose information in order to conduct its own investigation, to report to government authorities, or to respond appropriately to an incident of abuse.
6. Childcare workers may become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care that is occurring outside our church. In the event this occurs, this should be reported immediately to the senior pastor for further action including reporting to the authorities as may be mandated by state law.

### **Response Plan to Suspected Abuse or Allegations of Abuse**

It is the responsibility of the elders to process every allegation of abuse or neglect occurring at CrossWay Bible Church or during a program or activity that we sponsor, documenting each conversation or contact as it takes place. They will determine the appropriate response, including:

1. They shall designate two or three elders to speak with the individual(s) involved to determine the facts and report to the elders.

2. The elders may seek counsel with appropriate persons regarding next steps and whether there is a need to report the incident to legal authorities. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law requires.
3. The elders may notify parents/guardians of alleged abuse, contingent upon advice from law enforcement agencies.
4. The worker alleged to be a perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
5. If the reported incident appears to be true, the incident must be reported immediately to our insurance company.
6. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. Even if there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, the elders will investigate the circumstances of the incident.
7. Any person who is found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct will face appropriate steps of church discipline. He/she will be removed from any position involving children and/or youth. Even if there is genuine repentance on the part of the offender, and forgiveness is extended, prudence dictates that a position involving children and/or youth shall not be soon restored.
8. The senior pastor of the congregation will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.

*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,  
it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck  
and he were thrown into the sea.*

Mark 9:42

## SECTION 9: FACILITY USAGE POLICY

Adopted August 23, 2015

### THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHURCH

The ultimate purpose of CrossWay Bible Church is to give glory to God. We give glory to God by submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ out of love and by obeying His Word.

The immediate purposes of this church are to give glory to God by

- 1) worshiping Him together,
- 2) cultivating fellowship with one another,
- 3) discipling one another toward Christlikeness,
- 4) equipping and encouraging believers to minister God's grace to one another,
- 5) equipping and encouraging one another to evangelize the lost,
- 6) and proclaiming and guarding the Truth God has entrusted to her.

- As written in CrossWay Bible Church *Faith in Practice*, Section 3. Purpose.

### BASIC PHILOSOPHY

1. The facilities and grounds of CrossWay Bible Church were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. They have been dedicated to the Lord to be used only in accordance with the purposes for which this church exists.
2. The church facilities are primarily for use by its members. Use by non-members is only permitted with special permission from the elders.
3. In addition to regular church functions, we want the facility to support and promote strong Christian families, like-minded ministry and service organizations, and outreach into the community.
4. Persons, groups, or organizations that are known to hold and advocate belief(s) or practice(s) that differ from the faith and moral teachings of the church are not permitted to use the facilities. Nor shall the church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings.
5. The church facilities are not available for use by "for profit" enterprises.
6. The elders are the final decision-maker concerning the use of the church facilities. They have the sole discretion to determine the compatibility of any event with the faith and moral teachings of CrossWay.

Restricting the use of its facilities is important to CrossWay Bible Church in order to avoid every appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22), to not be complicit in any wrongdoing (II Cor. 6:14), and to maintain a clear and vibrant testimony for our Lord (II Cor. 1:12).

## **RESERVATION PROCEDURE**

Any person or group wishing to use the church facilities must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form. The form should be submitted at least one week (if possible) and not more than one year in advance. By signing the form, agreement is expressed to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use. Regularly scheduled church services are exempt from this requirement.

## **PRIORITY OF USE**

Generally, reservations will be granted on a first-come, first-serve basis. However, if scheduling conflicts should occur, the following priority list will be used to determine which event takes precedence:

Priority #1: Regularly scheduled church services.

Priority #2: Church sponsored events (e.g. special meetings, funerals, Youth Group activities).

Priority #3: Weddings for church member(s).

Priority #4: Personal family functions sponsored by a church member (e.g. anniversary celebrations, family reunions, birthday parties, bridal or baby showers, piano recitals).

Priority #5: Functions or activities of like-minded ministry and service organizations sponsored by a church member. Said church member shall be in attendance for the duration of the event.

Priority #6: All other requests specifically approved by the elder board.

*Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
do all to the glory of God.*

I Corinthians 10:31

## CHURCH FACILITY RESERVATION REQUEST AND AGREEMENT

A. Name and contact information of person or group requesting use of the church facilities:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Member: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

B. Rooms requested:

Entire church building \_\_\_ Fellowship Hall \_\_\_ Kitchen \_\_\_ Classroom(s) \_\_\_

Note: When using the church facilities, a donation to help pay for the utilities and the upkeep of the building is appreciated. Suggested donations are as follows:

- Whole Church Building	200.00	- Kitchen	50.00
- Fellowship Hall	100.00	- One Classroom	25.00

C. Date and Time of planned event: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Purpose for which you intend to use the facilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### E. I affirm that

1. Persons, groups, or organizations that are known to hold and advocate belief(s) or practice(s) that differ from the faith and moral teachings of CrossWay Bible Church are not permitted to use the facilities. Nor shall the church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. To the best of my knowledge the proposed activity is consistent with the purposes of this church.
2. The conduct of all users must be in good taste, respecting the fact that the entire premises has been dedicated to the Lord. The use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, non-prescription drugs, and dancing are not permitted under any circumstances.
3. Abusive or foul language and violent behavior are prohibited. Any person exhibiting such behavior shall be asked to leave the premises by the sponsor of the event.
4. Set-up and clean-up of any equipment involved in the event is the responsibility of the sponsoring member(s). All items are to be returned to their original location after the event. The facility is to be left in the condition in which it was found.
5. Groups are restricted to those areas of the facility which have been reserved.
6. The lights must be turned off and the doors locked upon departure.
7. I will be responsible for any damage to the church facility resulting from the proposed use.
8. I have read and will abide by this agreement.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 10. WORSHIP

Adopted September 24, 2014

### Introduction

God calls CrossWay Bible Church to bring glory to Him in all we do (I Cor.10:31). Glorifying God finds its first expression as we worship Him together. Certainly our God is worthy of our worship. He is seeking people to worship Him together. We are committed to serving Him with our worship.

We believe it is important to define our understanding of worship at CrossWay, including specifics on how we will use music. We do so because we are “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3). It is our desire to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together we may with one voice glorify our God (Rom.15:5&6).

### Definition

To worship God is to express from the heart how great He is. It is to acknowledge and magnify His infinite superiority over us. It is to adore Him for who He is. There are numerous ways to worship God. We can worship God by speaking of Him to others, proclaiming His Word, praying to Him, giving to Him, and singing to Him.

### General Principles

- A. True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:23&24). Worship actually takes place in the spirit of man. It is first and foremost an attitude of the heart. While certain physical surroundings, such as a beautiful sanctuary or a certain style of music, may be more conducive to worship, they are not the essence of worship.
- B. God-honoring worship occurs “in truth.” We desire to worship God as He has revealed Himself to us in His Word. We do not worship God according to how we feel, but according to who He is.
- C. True worship is focused on God (Ps.115:1). It is our desire to worship the Creator, not the creature. Anything that draws attention away from our God is not desirable. This applies to the conduct and dress of the worshiper, the worship leader, and/or the musician(s). It also applies to the kind of music that is chosen and how it is performed, always remembering that our primary audience is God Himself.
- D. God has given us singing and music, including the use of instruments, to enhance our worship of Him and to edify one another (Ps.150; Col.3:16&17). Music uniquely enables us to worship Him with our whole being. It combines our mind (through the lyrics of the song) with our emotions (through the melody of the song) in adoring and praising Him.
- E. Music is also particularly well-suited to help us remember the truth of God’s Word during our day-to-day living. What is learned in song is remembered long. Therefore, the words of our music need to accurately reflect sound doctrine and be the focus.
- F. We are not to be a stumbling block to one another (I Cor.8:9). To the best of our ability, it is our desire to conduct our worship service in a way that is not a hindrance to our fellow-believer in his worship of God.

“All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor” (I Cor.10:23&24).

### **Specific Guidelines**

The Bible does not give us specific instructions regarding what style of music to use for worship. Yet it is impossible for a local church to avoid making a choice in this matter. Different centuries and different cultures and different age groups have composed different music with which to worship the Lord. In adopting the following guidelines, we are not condemning the music other believers around the world may have chosen to use. We are simply attempting to define the type and use of music we believe would be most conducive for worship for our church family at CrossWay.

Generally our music at CrossWay will be “conservative” and “traditional” in nature. We appreciate the hymns that have been handed down to us from previous generations and it is our desire to use them. We also enjoy singing some of the newer songs that have equally rich words. We encourage the use of instruments, as long as they are played in a manner that does not draw attention to themselves. We consider it helpful to have the words provided when an instrumental number is played. We generally refrain from applauding so as not to highlight the performance.

### **Summary**

Inevitably there will be differences of opinion in the area of music. When these differences arise, they should be referred to the elders, and the elder’s decision should be joyfully accepted.

Every worshiper at CrossWay Bible Church is encouraged to take every thought captive and focus on God during our time of corporate worship. It is our desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Every worshiper is also encouraged to look out not only for his own personal interests, but also for the interests of others; in honor giving preference to one another. It should be the desire of each one to provide an environment that is conducive for worship for his brother, not just himself.

*It is good to give thanks to the Lord,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;  
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,  
and your faithfulness by night,  
to the music of the lute and the harp,  
to the melody of the lyre.*

Psalm 92:1-3

## SECTION 11. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Adopted September 24, 2014

### Introduction

A significant amount of confusion exists today on the role of women within the church. God has beautifully designed how women and men should function within the local church. It is a design that leads to joy, fulfillment, and peace for everyone. But all too often God's design has been abandoned to the detriment of those who do so.

At CrossWay Bible Church, it is our joyous duty and our sincere desire to be obedient to the Scriptures. Only as we submit ourselves to its directives, will we "know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). There are times when this commitment leads us in a way that is counter-cultural.

### Observations from Scripture

#### A. The Tremendous Value of Women.

"A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Prov. 31:30). When God created woman, it was very good (Gen. 1:31). Her presence corrected a situation that was not good, for God had said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18). Both man and woman were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Thus they are of equal value to Him and to us.

Men and women are also equal before the Lord in Christ (Gal. 3:28). The need for a Savior and the means of salvation is identical for both, "being heirs together of the grace of life" (I Pet. 3:7). Men and women are equally interdependent upon each other for their very existence (I Cor. 11:11-12).

#### B. The Contributions of Believing Women in the New Testament.

The New Testament teaches that there is much for women to do within the church. There are numerous examples of women who served in the early church in various ways. Examples include women who participated in prayer meetings (Acts 1:14, 12:12-14; I Cor. 11:5), practiced hospitality (Acts 16:15), served the church (Rom. 16:1), labored with Paul in the gospel (Phil. 4:3), taught within their family (II Tim. 1:5), and hosted the church in their homes (Acts 12:12).

The Bible also includes commands directed to all Christians. Thus women are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), be kind (Eph. 4:32), comfort one another (I Thess. 4:18), edify one another (I Thess. 5:11), exhort one another (Heb. 3:13), love one another (Rom. 12:10), etc.

Believing women were baptized (Acts 8:12), received spiritual gifts (I Pet. 4:10), suffered persecution (Acts 8:3), need to be diligent until the end (Heb. 6:11), and will give an account to the Lord (Rom. 14:12).

#### C. The Teaching of I Timothy 2.

An important passage in determining the Biblical role of women within the church is found in I Tim. 2:11-12, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, she is to remain quiet." While our culture may deem this verse controversial, we wish to submit to its instruction. Before the Lord we want to be faithful in applying this verse in our church.

God in His sovereignty has given men the responsibility and the authority to lead. The prohibition in this verse is to prevent the divine order from being turned upside down. A Biblical church embraces God's design and thus will not permit a woman to teach a man, or to have authority over him.

Rather, she is to remain quiet. This gentle and quiet spirit is very precious in God's sight (I Pet. 3:4). A study of the Greek word for quiet, *hesuchia*, reveals that the best understanding is not complete silence, but the quietness of a calm and submissive attitude.

D. The Teaching of I Corinthians 14.

Another relevant passage is found in I Cor. 14:34-35, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

The overall context of I Cor. 11-14 is that all things, and church life in particular, be done decently and in order, as God is not a God of confusion (I Cor. 11:2-3; 14:33&40). These verses are given to uphold the same God-given order we see elsewhere in Scripture.

The question that must be answered is when women are to be silent. It is clear from the verses mentioned above under "B" that this verse cannot mean women are never permitted to say a word within the church, for it would not be possible to carry out their God-given instructions without speaking. To answer this question, it is helpful to note the Greek word for speaking, *laleo*. This commonly used word is sometimes translated "preach," as in Mk. 2:2, "And He (Jesus) preached the word to them." In other places, *laleo* refers to speaking in tongues, as in Acts 2:11. Applying these meanings of *laleo* to I Cor. 14:34 would mean women are to be silent in church as opposed to speaking in tongues, preaching, and discerning prophecies. This fits well with the immediate context of vs.23-40, where restrictions are being placed on prophesying and speaking in tongues. It also agrees with I Tim. 2:11-12.

### **Application**

At CrossWay, we are very thankful for the women God has made a part of our congregation. We deeply value their many contributions to the well-being of our church. They are irreplaceable.

We're also thankful for the men God has given us. We desire to create an environment that reflects Scripture and encourages men to fulfill their God-given responsibility to lead within the church and their families.

We believe men and women are equally created in the image of God and are of equal worth in the sight of God. We reject every notion that either gender is superior to the other. A difference in God-given responsibilities is never meant to imply a difference in worth, ability, or skill.

Any time there is an organized gathering of men and women of our church (e.g. worship service, Bible study, sharing time, singing, praying, choir), the men are to do the teaching and/or provide the leadership for the event. Admittedly where we draw the line between a child and an adult is somewhat arbitrary. But as far as this issue is concerned, we choose to view those who are in sixth grade and younger as children and those who are in Junior High and older as adults.

Under male leadership, we believe there remains much freedom for women to participate in our church gatherings. We consider reading a verse or answering a question, sharing a testimony or giving a missions report, praying out loud or providing special music, all to be appropriate ways for women to contribute. We encourage the ladies to develop the skills and talents God has given them in teaching by being involved in the children's classes and instructing one another (Tit. 2:4). We encourage all to be willing and able to tell what God is doing in their lives, "to always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (I Pet.3:15). It is important that appropriate opportunities for this to take place be provided.

### **Conclusion**

It is our desire at CrossWay Bible Church to fulfill our roles as men and women as God has directed us in His Word. Perhaps the world will claim that living by Biblical commands is old-fashioned and oppressive. But as believers we know that "His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3). They are, in fact, the only way to true joy, fulfillment, unity, and peace.

## **SECTION 12. MARRIAGE**

Adopted February 8, 2017

### **Introduction**

Marriage is a wonderful gift God has given to mankind. Its importance can hardly be overstated, or all its benefits enumerated. Marriage is the first and the foundational institution in human society; it is designed to demonstrate the relationship Christ has to His bride, the church; it provides for meaningful and deep companionship; it creates the best possible environment in which to raise healthy children; it is the backbone of a strong society and nation.

God instructs mankind to honor the institution of marriage (Heb. 13:4). It is the desire of CrossWay Bible Church to uphold the sanctity of marriage. We do so by being obedient to the instructions God has given us concerning marriage, by faithfully fulfilling our God-given roles as husband and wife, and by teaching these principles in our homes and church.

The following summarizes important parts of CrossWay's position regarding marriage. For a more detailed statement, including the Biblical basis for our position, please contact one of the elders.

### **I. Marriage Defined**

*We believe God ordained marriage to only be the union of one man and one woman, committed exclusively to each other for as long as both shall live.*

#### **A) The Permanence of Marriage**

We believe death constitutes the only Biblically legitimate dissolution of the marriage vows. Every deviation from this definition, including every divorce, is contrary to God's design and original intent for marriage. It is contrary to His will and a sinful separation of what He has joined.

## B) The Privilege of Marriage

Sexual intimacy is only to be expressed within the love and bonds of marriage. Every conceivable deviation from this standard is sinful and offensive to God, including, but not limited to, pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, homosexuality, pornography, incest, cohabitation, polygamy, pedophilia, bisexuality, bestiality, and attempting to change one's God-given gender as genetically defined.

## C) The Possibility of Remarriage

We believe remarriage following divorce to someone other than one's original spouse is sin. Only after God dissolves the marriage union through death does remarriage become a God-honoring option for the surviving spouse.

## II. Our Attitude and Response towards Those Who Are Divorced and/or Remarried

### A) Towards the Repentant

While we choose to stand firmly on the Biblical principles God has given us regarding divorce and remarriage, *we are equally eager to affirm that forgiveness and reconciliation are available to all who turn to the Lord.*

Neither divorce nor remarriage constitutes an unpardonable sin. The remedy for all sin is the same. Pardon for every sin is available because of the shed blood of Jesus, and is attained by turning to Him. The door to reconciliation and restoration is repentance, not accommodation.

Our arms and hearts are open to those who are hurting. We desire for all people to come to know the Lord, forsake their sin, and follow Him instead. Those who demonstrate such a desire are welcome to become members of our church, regardless of their marital history.

### B) Towards the Unrepentant

Even as divorce and remarriage are not in a class by themselves if the offender turns from his sin to Christ, so they are the same as any other public sin if the offender does not turn from his sin.

1. A person who has divorce or remarriage in his past and does not acknowledge such past action as sin, with a desire to do what is right in the future, is not eligible for membership.
2. A member who chooses to divorce, whether by his own initiative or his unwillingness to work towards saving his marriage, will be subject to church discipline in the hope of bringing him to genuine heartfelt repentance.
3. A member who has been divorced and chooses to remarry, or marries a divorced person, will be subject to church discipline in the hope of bringing him to genuine heartfelt repentance.

Thus we place the sin of divorce and remarriage in the same category as any other public sin when it comes to church discipline and church membership. Reconciliation and restoration are available. The issue is: Does the person admit what he did was sin? Does he renounce it? Is he willing to do what he can to make things right? The answer to these questions determines our response to the one who has fallen into sin.

### **III. The Commitment of the Elders at CrossWay Bible Church**

1. We will seek to guard and protect the flock with sound doctrine.
2. We will condone and bless only the marriage of one man to one woman.
3. We will never counsel a couple to get a divorce. We will do all we can to save the marriage. This includes those unions that have been formed through remarriage.
4. We will always walk with those who are struggling in their marriage, with a view toward repentance and reconciliation.
5. We will work to protect a spouse and/or children in an abusive situation through prayer, counseling, and, if necessary, a legal separation, but not divorce. We will strive to protect both the individual from abuse and the marriage from divorce.
6. We will not condone the remarriage of a divorced person to another person while their spouse is still alive, neither by performing the wedding ceremony or providing the facility.
7. We will love those who have been divorced and/or remarried, seeking to bring them to a place of repentance and fellowship with our Lord.