

ARTICLES OF CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the Church shall be Christ Community Church of Beatrice, Nebraska.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Church shall be to glorify God by edification of believers through Bible study; prayer, worship, fellowship and service so that believers might be trained for ministry and souls might be added to the Church of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe the scriptures, including both the Old and New Testaments, to be the verbally inspired Word of God, written by men in God's control, inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts and it is our sole and final authority in faith and life, (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalms 19:7-9).

B. ONE TRIUNE GOD

We believe there is only one true and living God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself in three persons revealed in the scriptures as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are distinct and co-equal, yet one in essence, (2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:11-17; 28:19).

1. GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom and measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, (John 5:19-24; 16:23-27; Ephesians 1:3-14).

2. GOD THE SON

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, born of a virgin, wholly God and wholly man, sinless in His life, who atoned for the sins of the world by His death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection,

His ascension into heaven, His high priestly intercession for His people, and His personal, visible, premillennial return to the world according to His promise, (Matthew 1:18-25; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 7:23-38).

3. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine person who convicts the world of sin: that He brings new life to those who are spiritually dead: that He baptizes (or places) all believers into the one true Church, which is the Body of Christ: that He indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts upon them fills (controls) those who are yielding to Him, (John 3:3-8; 16:7-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 14:16-17; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 5:18).

C. THE CONDITION OF MAN

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, in innocence and without sin. But in Adam's sin, the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, became spiritually dead and alienated from God. Man of himself is incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition, (Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; Romans 3:10-18; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3).

D. SALVATION

We believe that salvation is the gift of God's grace. It cannot be gained by meritorious works, but is freely bestowed upon all that put their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary. All who so trust the Savior are forgiven of their sins and born into the family of God by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, (Ephesians 2:8-9; 1:7; John 1:12).

E. SECURITY, ASSURANCE, AND RESPONSIBILITY

We believe that all the saved, those in whom God has accomplished His transforming work of Grace, are kept by His power and are, thus, secure in Christ forever. It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation. However, this assurance is not the occasion for sin, for God in holiness cannot tolerate persistent sin in His children, and in infinite love He corrects them. True faith in Christ is expressed by a fruitful, God-pleasing life, (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:29-39; 1 John 5:13; Hebrews 12:6; Matthew 7:20; James 2:20).

F. THE CHURCH

We believe that the true Church, called in scripture the Body of Christ, is a spiritual organism into which every person who has trusted Jesus Christ for salvation in this present age has been baptized by the Holy Spirit. The scripture

also teaches the establishment and continuance of local Churches, groups of redeemed individuals joined together for worship, instruction, fellowship and service, (Ephesians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:42; 13:1-2).

G. ORDINANCES

We believe in observing the ordinances of the Lord's Supper, which is a symbolic representation of our Savior's suffering and death. We further believe that baptism by immersion be administered following confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a symbol of spiritual regeneration, (Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-28; Acts 8:26-39; 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

H. THE RAPTURE AND SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for the rapture of His Church, and His subsequent premillennial return to earth to establish His Kingdom, (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

I. THE ETERNAL STATE

We believe that at death the souls of those who have trusted Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the Church, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be separated from God forever in conscious punishment. (Luke 16:19-26; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15; 1 Corinthians 15:41-42).

ARTICLE IV. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this organization shall consist of those who give clear evidence of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and follow the Lord's command to be baptized. Primary emphasis is upon a personal, vital relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord.

B. PROCEDURE FOR MEMBERSHIP

Any person desiring to unite with this Church shall be interviewed by the official board and give written assent to the Articles of Constitution. Upon unanimous

approval of the official board, the individual will be received into the membership of the Church at a regular service. A youngster under legal age (18) would be required to sign again upon reaching legal age.

C. DUTIES OF THE MEMBERSHIP

The member, by his attendance, (1) accepts the privileges of local Church affiliation, (2) submits himself to the official board leadership and loving discipline, and (3) accepts the responsibility of exercising his gifts for the benefit of the Church.

D. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

God has placed the responsibility upon each believer to judge himself. If we fail to do this, our brethren in the local Church are given this responsibility and we will be disciplined by the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). According to the scripture, (1 Corinthians 5:12-13; Romans 2:1-3; Matthew 7:1-5) we are not to judge those outside the Church (unbelievers). It is imperative that in disciplinary actions we follow scriptural guidelines, lest we be guilty of hypocrisy or of falling into the same sins. Obviously, discipline is for specific sins and not differences in opinions, (1 Corinthians 5:1, 11-13; 1 Timothy 5:19-21; 2 Thessalonians 3:14). We believe the scripture teaches us to use the following procedure in restoring a fellow member: (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 12:15).

1. The person who is aware of the offense is to be the first person to prayerfully confront a sinning member.
2. If the sinning member refuses to deal with the problem, the first person is to take a "witness" for a second meeting, one of which should be a board member.
3. If the sinning member still refuses to deal with the problem, then it is to be brought before the official board, which shall bring the matter to the attention of the members of the Church by general announcement. If the individual refuses to listen even to the Church, at this time all individuals attending the Church are to break fellowship with the sinning member. The purpose of breaking fellowship is to prayerfully restore the individual. (Note: the specific sin need not be mentioned unless it has been so decided by the official board.) These steps must be taken in the above order. All must be done with the attitude of love and prayer, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, with the goal of restoration in mind. Gentleness and spiritual alertness are very important in the above process (Galatians 6:1-2). If at any point in the process the sinning member repents the individual should immediately be welcomed and affirmed in love by those involved. If the matter has been resolved, fellowship is to be restored (2 Corinthians 2:6-8, 11).

E. DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

1. Any member in good standing desiring to withdraw from the membership of this church may be granted a letter of standing. Any member uniting with another Church may be dropped from the membership of this Church.
2. Any member absent from the Church services for six months without satisfactory reasons may, at the discretion of the official board, have his name removed from the membership following written notification. Upon written notification to the individual the congregation shall be informed on all membership dismissals.

ARTICLE V. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

A. OFFICERS

1. THE HEAD

Jesus Christ is the singular sovereign head of the Church, which is His body. He is the first and chief officer of the Church.

2. THE ELDERS

a. Elders, otherwise known as Pastors and Overseers, are the chief human leadership officers in the Church.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) GENERAL

(a) Elders are responsible to shepherd and oversee the Church in such a way as to fulfill the desires of the Head.

(b) Elders are responsible to shepherd and oversee the Church in such a way as to bring the Church individually and collectively to maturity in Jesus Christ.

(2) SPECIFIC

Elders are responsible for the Pastoral care of the Church which ministry includes training, leadership, feeding, protecting, caring, comforting the sick and afflicted, praying, teaching, admonishing, exhorting, disciplining, warning and providing an example.

c. QUALIFICATIONS

An Elder must evidence the qualifications prescribed for that office in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

d. SELECTION OF ELDERS

(1) Nominations for Elder are to be submitted to the existing Elder board by any member of the church.

(2) The nominee will be required to fill out a self-evaluation.

(3) Upon unanimous approval of the Elder board, the nominee will be presented to the Church family for consideration. Each nominee must be confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation at its annual business meeting.

(4) Candidates will be required to be members for one year.

e. TERM OF OFFICE

Four reasons may account for the discontinuation of any Elder's leadership role: death; geographical departure; personal desire, in which case he is expected to confer openly with the Elders; and disqualification, in which case discipline will be administered by the other Elders and the congregation in the prescribed manner of I Timothy 5:19-25. The term of office shall be for three years. He may be nominated again by the rest of the Elder board, subject to the nominating and election procedures already stated.

f. NUMBER

In the absence of any specific biblical direction on the number of Elders in a local Church, four considerations will be determinative: plurality, no fewer than three plus Senior Pastor; qualification; personal desire; and Church need. In the case that the minimum number of Elders is not obtained, an initial leadership board consisting of Elders and Deacons will make decisions.

g. ORGANIZATION

Positionally, the Elders will operate in equality. Functionally, they will organize themselves to include a chairman, a vice-chairman and a secretary. The relationship between Elders and Deacons will be as follows: The Elders will be responsible for laying out general policies, goals and procedures. The Deacons will be responsible for carrying out their ministries within this framework, making decisions as needed. Care should be taken that the Elders not become overextended into the administrative responsibilities of the Deacons and neglect the ministry of the Word and prayer.

h. VACANCIES

Vacancies may be filled by following the above procedure and calling a special Church business meeting. This meeting must be announced two weeks in advance both in the Church bulletin and from the pulpit, with the name or names of the nominee.

3. THE DEACONS

a. Deacons are official servers in the Church, ministering both to the Elders and to the congregation.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES

In the absence of a clearly defined biblical role, Deacons of Christ Community Church will serve in a twofold capacity: (1) supporting and assisting the Elders in such areas as to free them to shepherd and oversee the Church more efficiently and effectively.

(2) supporting and assisting the congregation in areas delegated to them by the Elders as needs arise.

c. QUALIFICATIONS

A Deacon must evidence the qualifications prescribed for that office in 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13 (cf., Acts 6:3).

d. SELECTION

Selection of Deacons will follow the same procedure as Elders using a Deacon recommendation form and a Deacon self-evaluation. The Deacon will give testimony to the Church body covering: a) personal salvation, b) growth experience, c) service involvement, d) their contribution to the body as a Deacon.

e. TERM OF OFFICE

Deacons will serve a two-year term repeatable at the Elder's and congregation's desire. Opportunity for evaluation will be given after every two years of service using step 3 of Deacon selection process. Otherwise, a deacon's official ministry may discontinue for like reasons and in like manner as an Elder's (Article V., Section 2e).

f. NUMBER

Qualification, personal desire, and Church need will determine the number of Deacons.

g. ORGANIZATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The relationship between Elders and Deacons will be as follows: the Elders will be responsible for laying out general policies, goals and procedures. The Deacons will be responsible for carrying out their ministries within this framework making decisions as needed. Care should be taken that the Elders not become over-extended into the administrative responsibilities of the deacons and neglect the ministry of the Word and prayer.

VI. SENIOR PASTOR

A. The pulpit committee, consisting of five people and two alternates, shall be selected by a combined committee of Elders and Deacons. One of these members shall be either an Elder or Deacon.

B. After screening candidates, the committee will select the best candidates to invite for candidating and interview with the elder board. Candidating should offer maximum exposure to the individual.

C. The Elder board will make their recommendation based on their time with the candidate and the congregation will call the Senior Pastor with a 3/4-majority vote.

D. Dismissal of the Senior Pastor.

It shall be the prerogative of any Senior Pastor to dissolve the Pastoral relationship by giving at least one month written notice of such intention, or less if mutually agreed. The board of Elders may initiate termination of any Senior Pastoral relationship by calling a board of Elders' meeting to consider the question. The decision to terminate the senior pastoral relationship shall be unanimous. The Senior Pastor shall be entitled to one month's salary after the date of termination, voluntary or involuntary, set by the board of Elders.

VII. DISCIPLINE OF LEADERSHIP

The discipline of Elders and Deacons shall follow the procedures as outlined in discipline of membership (Article IV, Section D). A charge or accusation brought against an Elder or Deacon is a serious matter, and shall be made privately to the board of Elders, who will hear the matter and make known what disciplinary action is required (1 Timothy 5:19-20; Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 14:19). At the discretion of the board of Elders immediate resignation or temporary suspension may be required during the period of restoration.

VIII. VOTING RIGHTS

All members, 18 years and over, shall decide by 3/4 majority vote (with the exception of constitution changes which would require 4/5 majority) the following items:

- A. The Calling of Senior Pastor
- B. Major real estate acquisitions and major building decisions
- C. Constitution changes
- D. Approve annual budget

IX. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

A. Special meetings will be called as needed. These meetings will be given to discussing various matters relating to the entire Church, such as budget changes, new ministries, disciplinary actions, etc. Every effort will be made by the leadership to keep communication open.

B. All meetings requiring a vote of congregation will be announced for two Sundays in advance.

C. A Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary and Assistant Secretary for congregational meetings shall be selected by the Elders. These offices will be for a term of one year.

X. OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, DEPARTMENTS AND BY-LAWS:

Other officers, boards, committees, departments and by-laws may be developed by the Elders and Deacons as needed by the local Church. Guidelines for all areas not specifically mentioned in the constitution shall be included in a policy manual developed by the Elders. All committee personnel will be members of Christ Community Church.

XI. AMENDMENTS

Suggestions for amending this constitution may be initiated and brought to the Elders by a member of the Church, a committee or the Elders themselves. Upon the Elders' unanimous recommendation, the proposed amendment will be presented to the membership at a regular session, and a two-week period for discussion will be allowed thereafter. A 4/5 majority vote of the members present and voting at a specially called meeting will adopt and amend the constitution.

XII. APPENDIX--SEE DEACON, ELDER NOMINATION: EVALUATION AND SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH
2727 Lincoln Blvd.
Beatrice, Nebraska 68310

ADOPTED: July 13, 1986
AMENDED: May 22, 1988
AMENDED: June 4, 1989
AMENDED: August 27, 1989

Christ Community Church also agrees with the Nashville Statement and the Danvers Statement.

Nashville Statement

On Aug. 29, 2017, a broad coalition of Christian leaders released the Nashville Statement, a new doctrinal declaration articulating God's design for humans as male and female.

Statement found at <https://cbmw.org/nashville-statement>

Preamble

“Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...”

Psalm 100:3

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God’s design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ’s church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Articles

ARTICLE 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

ARTICLE 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

ARTICLE 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

ARTICLE 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

ARTICLE 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

ARTICLE 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about “eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb.” With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known. WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person’s biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

ARTICLE 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture. WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption.

ARTICLE 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life. WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God’s original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

ARTICLE 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality— a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality. WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

ARTICLE 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness. WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

ARTICLE 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image-bearers as male and female.

ARTICLE 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

ARTICLE 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

ARTICLE 13

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.

The Danvers Statement

The Danvers Statement summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.

Rationale

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;
2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;

3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;
4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;
5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;
6. the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;
7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;
8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;
9. the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;
10. and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

Purposes

Recognizing our own abiding sinfulness and fallibility, and acknowledging the genuine evangelical standing of many who do not agree with all of our convictions, nevertheless, moved by the preceding observations and by the hope that the noble Biblical vision of sexual complementarity may yet win the mind and heart of Christ's church, we engage to pursue the following purposes:

1. To study and set forth the Biblical view of the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and in the church.
2. To promote the publication of scholarly and popular materials representing this view.
3. To encourage the confidence of lay people to study and understand for themselves the teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of relationships between men and women.
4. To encourage the considered and sensitive application of this Biblical view in the appropriate spheres of life.
5. And thereby

—to bring healing to persons and relationships injured by an inadequate grasp of God's will concerning manhood and womanhood,

—to help both men and women realize their full ministry potential through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles,
—and to promote the spread of the gospel among all peoples by fostering a Biblical wholeness in relationships that will attract a fractured world.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. **Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood** (Gen 1:26-27, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."; Gen 2:18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'").
2. **Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart** (Gen 2:18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"; Gen 2:21-24, "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'
Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."; 1 Cor 11:7-9, "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."; 1 Tim 2:12-14, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.").
3. **Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin** (Gen 2:16-18 "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"; Gen 2:21-24, "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon

the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Gen 3:1-13, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate.""; 1 Cor 11:7-9, "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.").

4. **The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women** (Gen 3:1-7, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said,

'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."'; Gen 3:12, "The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'"; Gen 3:16, "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.'").

1. In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 2. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."; Gen 2:18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"; Gal 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."). **Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community** (Gen 2:18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"; Eph 5:21-33; "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit ^{to} in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.";

Col 3:18-19, "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.";

1 Tim 2:11-15, "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.").

6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

1. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery

is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”; Col 3:18-19, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.”; Tit 2:3-5, “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”; 1 Pet 3:1-7, “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”)

2. **In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men** (Gal 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”; 1 Cor 11:2-16, “Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to

cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”, 1 Tim 2:11-15, “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”).

7. **In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin** (Dan 3:10-18, “You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.’ Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, ‘Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?’ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, ‘O

Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”; Acts 4:19-20, “But Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.’”; Acts 5:27-29, “And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, ‘We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.’ But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”; 1 Pet 3:1-2, “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”).

8. **In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries** (1 Tim 2:11-15, “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”; 1 Tim 3:1-13, “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband

of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”; Tit 1:5-9, “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”). **Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God’s will.**

9. **With half the world’s population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21, “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them,**

as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'").

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.