

Cornerstone Church of Knoxville
Membership Commitments
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Part 1: Our Commitment to Doctrine

The Scriptures

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology, must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

God Is Triune

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

God the Father

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By his word and for his glory, he freely and supernaturally created the world of nothing. Through the same Word he daily sustains all his creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and in his unfathomable grace gave his Son Jesus Christ for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of his glory.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was perfect in nature, teaching and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in him all things hold together by the word of his power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation and in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed his blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By his death in our place, he revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day he rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and for a period of forty days appeared to over five hundred witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of his resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, he intercedes for his people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of his body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel he persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshipped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

Man

God made man—male and female—in his own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

The Gospel

Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, his resurrection is the power of the gospel, and his ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases his holy wrath. It also demonstrates his mysterious love and reveals his amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what he has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross.

Man's Response to the Gospel

Man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for his own pleasure and glory. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and, by God's grace, put saving faith in Christ. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become his disciple.

Man's Inheritance through the Gospel

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and his substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes his child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and, via the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

Sanctification

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce his fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Spirit, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping his commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve his people until the end which is most certain.

Empowered by the Spirit

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced.

The Church

God by his Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, he guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve him by faithfully doing his will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in all the world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women

are added to a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry. Women play a vital role in the life of the church but in keeping with God's created design, they are not permitted "to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12). Leadership in the church is male. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in his service in relation to one another and to the world.

Sacraments of the Church

Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become his disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of his death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

The Consummation

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation,

Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with him forever. Married to Christ as his Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving him and giving him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.¹

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Part 2: Our Commitments to Each Other

Our Commitments about Peacemaking, Conflict, Disputes, and Lawsuits

The church is populated by sinners who have received grace but continue to face challenges in working out their salvation², especially in relationships. As the people of God, we commit to overcome our offenses in a biblically prescribed manner leading to resolution and peace. Bitterness, resentment, and broken relationships are not acceptable for the people of God.

The church has adopted as its practice the principles taught in Ken Sande's book, *The Peacemaker*³, which provides wise biblical counsel for resolving disputes.

When two church members cannot resolve conflict privately, they should seek the help of other wise church members. The church's pastors are also trained and desire to assist members in mediating disputes. If a dispute becomes long-standing without successful conciliation, members should seek pastoral help.

According to 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Christians should apply the wisdom and power of the gospel to address disputes among believers. They should recognize the help available through the mediation of the church through its pastors. If one or both parties refuse to turn from sin that produces the conflict, the pastors will seek to apply the steps of church discipline to restore peace and order in the church. Church members agree to refrain from filing lawsuits against other Christians and to seek conciliation through the church, unless the pastoral team reviews their situation and agrees that litigation is biblically legitimate.

If a church member has a dispute with a pastor that he does not believe has been successfully resolved, he should seek the assistance of another pastor and, if he deems necessary, inform the Senior Pastor for evaluation by the pastoral team. The pastoral team may also invite outside help from Sovereign Grace Ministries in pursuing resolution and reconciliation.

² Philippians 2:12

³ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Conflict*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997).

Our Commitments on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Divorce is a sad fact in our society and in the church at large. While God has, from the beginning, intended that marriage be life long⁴ and glorify God by reflecting the relationship of Christ and His church⁵, there are times when our Lord permits a believer to seek a divorce without sinning against God or a spouse.

We believe the only two conditions under which the Bible allows this are:

- When a spouse commits sins that involve sexual contact with another person;⁶
- When an unbelieving spouse abandons a marriage.⁷

It is important to note that God permits divorce in such cases. Divorce is not required, nor will the church encourage a spouse to divorce when he or she has faith toward God for the marriage to be restored – even when the situations listed above exist.

For the church to condone a divorce in these cases, the spouse must submit the facts of his or her marital situation to the pastors to determine before God in Scripture what He would permit. If a spouse who is a member of the church should seek a divorce from another member due to abandonment, he or she must first wait for the church to follow its practice of church discipline to the end. A conclusion that the sinning spouse is to be treated as an unbeliever must occur before divorce may become an option.

Separated spouses awaiting a pending divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court declares the divorce final and legally recognized. They should conduct themselves in the church as married persons.

If a divorced person becomes a member of the church, he or she must understand that remarriage will only be condoned by the church when the circumstances prior to the divorce, or following the divorce, fall under the two conditions listed above. If circumstances of the divorce do not conform to what Scripture deems acceptable, the divorced person should consider before God

⁴ Matthew 19:4-5; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

⁵ Ephesians 5:22-23

⁶ Matthew 5:31-32

⁷ 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

whether he or she should seek reconciliation with their former spouse. He or she should seek to confess to God and to his or her former spouse any sins committed in the seeking of the divorce that did not comply with the teaching of Scripture. He or she must recognize that apart from these conditions, remarriage is not an option.

Our Commitments regarding Membership and Discipline

Throughout its pages, the Bible sounds a recurring theme: those God loves He disciplines.⁸ Discipline is a sometimes challenging process through which God corrects his people's thoughts, words, and behavior so they can fulfill their calling to become like Him.

God disciplines his people through a variety of means. He calls his people first to self-discipline. Each Christian is called to hear the Word of God as he reads the Bible and hears the Bible taught and applied. As he compares his life to God's Word, he adjusts himself to conform to his Savior. But individual interaction with God through his Word is not the only means that God uses to make his children holy. God also uses his people.

"Brothers," writes Paul, "if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness...."⁹ As members of Cornerstone Church, we take seriously our responsibility to "restore" members who fail to allow God to discipline them personally for their sins. This process of restoration is often referred to as church discipline. Church discipline may be necessary because of sinful words, sinful behavior, or refusal to turn from heretical doctrine. This means that beginning with private confrontation and, if necessary, leading to public rebuke, we seek to help one another overcome any refusal to repent of those words and actions that the Bible clearly defines as sin.¹⁰

In addition to the restorative purpose described above, church discipline also serves to guard and preserve the honor of God by protecting the purity of God's church.¹¹ God has purposed his church to be a primary manifestation of his glory in this world. As such, the presence of unrepentant sinful behavior within the church tarnishes the glory of God which is being displayed to the world through his church. The church discipline process serves to protect the integrity of this representation by the church of God's glory.

⁸ "And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." Hebrews 12:5-6; *see also* verses 7-13.

⁹ Galatians 6:1

¹⁰ Other New Testament passages (besides Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:15-17) that support this practice include: 1 Corinthians 5; Acts: 20:28ff; Galatians 2:11-14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 3:10-11; Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

The Process of Church Discipline

Jesus outlined a process for church discipline in Matthew 18:15-17.¹² Initially, the process is informal: if a member or other Christian observes ongoing, unrepentant sin in a member, he or she should graciously confront that person. If the person refuses to repent, then the concerned brother or sister should involve one or two others, which may include a pastor / pastors. If this group confirms that, in fact, the sin or doctrinal error continues without repentance, the church will initiate formal steps.

When the church begins to formally discipline a member, one or more of the pastors will meet with the member to confirm fact and to appeal for change. The pastors may also inform certain other members of the church of the erring member and his sin, urging these other members to contact the member and appeal for repentance. During this time, the member under discipline may not participate in the Lord's Supper.

If, after a reasonable period of appeal,¹³ no repentance is forthcoming, the pastors will inform the church of the unrepentant sin and that they must remove the individual from the church membership. The pastors may inform the church by either (1) making an announcement at a church "Members' Family Night"¹⁴ or other private meeting (2) if there are circumstances which in the discretion of the pastors require a more immediate notification, sending a letter to each member. In the announcement at the Members' Family Night or, if applicable, in the letter, the pastors may communicate that the individual will be removed from membership as a result of unrepentant sin, describe the nature of the sins which require removal from membership and the process undertaken by the pastors in coming to this decision, and provide any other information relevant to the situation.

¹² "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

¹³ The pastors may decide to abbreviate the process of appeal for repentance if the sin is especially notorious, or if the member proves to be factious, disruptive, or leading others into sin or error. In these cases, the pastors may ask church members to avoid all contact with an individual in order to mitigate his sinful influence.

¹⁴ A "Members' Family Night" is a meeting which takes place separate from the regular Sunday morning worship service of Cornerstone Church and which is announced as being open for the attendance of members of Cornerstone Church only.

Relating with Removed Members

Church discipline involves first confronting in love and gentleness and, if unsuccessful, withholding biblical fellowship. Church discipline has nothing to do with “shunning” a person. It is not a complete rejection of a relationship but a change in the nature of a relationship. Thus, it is appropriate for members of the church to interact with a person who has been removed from membership pursuant to church discipline, but they should not have “fellowship” as the Bible defines it. Rather, they should appeal for the former member to turn from sin and put his or her faith in Jesus’ work on the cross. If a person under discipline is not factious or disruptive or a harmful influence, he is welcomed to attend all church meetings that are open to unbelievers with the exception of small groups that meet for the purpose of fellowship.

Once the pastors make a member’s sin known to the church, they commit as well to inform the church of that member’s repentance and restoration to fellowship as appropriate to the situation and the good of the church.

Voluntary Withdrawal of Membership to Avoid the Disciplinary Process

At times, a member may seek to withdraw from the church to avoid church discipline and its consequences. Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock,¹⁵ so will the pastors and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through biblical discipline. Therefore, church discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership in the church.

Removed Member Participation in Other Churches

If a person leaves the church when he or she is in the midst of the disciplinary process or has been removed from the membership of the church, and if the pastors learn that he or she is attending another church, they may (1) inform the pastors of the other church that the person is currently under church discipline, including the nature of the unrepentant sin leading to discipline, and (2) ask the other church to encourage the former member to repent of his or her sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people against whom he or she has sinned. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his or her sin, and, at the same

¹⁵ See Matthew 18:12-14; Ezekiel 34:4, 8, 16.

time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the former member might cause to that church body.¹⁶

Additionally, individuals who attend Cornerstone Church and who have been excluded from fellowship from another church will not be allowed to participate in fellowship at or be members of Cornerstone Church unless: (1) they repent of their sins and make confession and restitution with their former church; or (2) the pastors of Cornerstone Church are able to determine that the former church did not apply church discipline according to Scripture.

¹⁶ See Matthew 18:12-14; Romans 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9, 14-15; 3 John 9-10.

Our Commitments about Counseling and Confidentiality

Every reasonable effort will be made to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a pastoral counseling context. However, there may be times when CCK pastors deem it necessary or appropriate to share confidential information with one another, other church members, or others outside the church. These would be people currently involved in the church member's problem or who may serve in the solution to the problem. The pastors may do this for the purpose of additional counsel, for the purpose of protecting others from the damaging effect of someone's sin, or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the people of the church.

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has in our lives and our relationships.¹⁷ Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from the pastors, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight.¹⁸ Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make a confession and to seek counsel from each other and especially from its pastoral counselors.

We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastors nor the Biblical counselors¹⁹ are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

Although some members of the church work in professional fields outside of the church, when serving as pastoral or biblical counselors within the church, they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical or other technical questions should seek advice from independent professionals. Our pastoral and biblical counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in light of relevant scriptural principles.

¹⁷ See Romans 3:23, 7:7-25.

¹⁸ See Romans 5:14, Galatians 6:1-2, Colossians 3:16, 2Timothy 3:16-4:2, Hebrews 10:24-25, 13:17; James 5:16.

¹⁹ Throughout this statement "biblical counselors" may include members of the church's Biblical Counseling Team (typically comprised of members who are not paid staff) as well as Care Group leaders.

Our Commitments in Children's Ministry

Cornerstone Church of Knoxville's Children's Ministry (called CM for short) makes several commitments to our members and guests.

We are committed to support the parents' role in raising their children. Parents are given specific grace to lead their children in the gospel. Our guiding principle in CM, therefore, is to support and encourage the efforts of parents in teaching their children, while enabling the parents to participate in the worship of the Savior and engage in the preaching of the Word of God.

We are committed to provide curricula that faithfully teach the Word of God to our children. We choose curricula that we believe to be doctrinally sound, biblically rich and age appropriate.

We are committed to take every reasonable precaution to keep children safe while they are in our care. We do that in a number of ways:

- Only church members who have submitted to a detailed screening process are allowed to serve in CM
- We complete national background checks (including sex offender searches) for all adult CM workers and security personnel
- No youth may serve in CM without direct supervision of approved adults
- We maintain detailed policies that are designed to avoid any unsafe situation for our children, including:
 - Bathroom guidelines of only parents assisting their children
 - A policy not to change diapers, rather to calling a parent to assist
 - Ensuring no adult is ever left alone with a child
 - Snack guidelines to make sure children with allergies are safe
 - Locking the Younger CM area during the Sunday Meeting and allowing access only to those who have key tags
 - Releasing children only to those who produce key tags that correspond to the child, in order to ensure only approved adults check out the children

We are committed to providing a clean and healthy environment for our children. To do so, we enforce several policies:

- We clean and sanitize toys, tables, chairs and floor mats with a food-grade sanitizer.

- Our sick policy states that no child who has had a fever, diarrhea, colored nasal drainage or vomiting in the past 48 hours should be in CM. We also ask the same of adults who serve in CM to find a substitute if they or their children show any of the above symptoms

Children are gifts from God (Psalm 127.3), and it is our privilege and joy to partner with the parents of CCK to raise them up in the way they should go, loving and caring for them as the gifts they are.

Our Commitments to Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

The 10 Affirmations of the Danvers Statement

In December 1987, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) met in Danvers, Massachusetts to compose the “Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood”. C.J. Mahaney, president of Sovereign Grace Ministries, is a CBMW board member. As a church we agree with the following statement.

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 distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18).
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 (Genesis 2:18, 21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:12-14).
3. Adam’s headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Genesis 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Genesis 3:1-7, 12, 16).
 - 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.
 - 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 (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18; Galatians 3:28). Both the Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in

the covenant community (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15).

6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - 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 (Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7).
 - 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 (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15).
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 (Daniel 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Peter 3:1-2).
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 Timothy 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). 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 Corinthians 12:7-21).
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.

