

# **CROSSWAY CHURCH**

  

# **MEMBER HANDBOOK**

Crossway Church  
330 Barbara Street  
Millersville, PA 17551  
717.872.7917  
[crosswaypa.org](http://crosswaypa.org)

*Crossway Church Member Handbook*

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PART ONE

CHURCH LIFE



# 1

## Why a Member Handbook?

When Christians get together to form a church there are many of practical matters to think through. None of these rival the most important truths—core doctrines like the Triune God and the gospel of Jesus Christ, or central commandments to love God, love one another, and love our neighbor. Yet, they are important nonetheless. Some of these issues include questions like, *what does it mean to join a church, or how do we join this particular church? What does church discipline look like? Does our church have bylaws and articles of incorporation? What are elders and deacons at this church? What does it mean that this church is connected to Sovereign Grace Churches?* This Member Handbook is meant to supply answers to many of these questions—not all, but many.

We should say at the outset that the matters contained in the Member Handbook are ones that don't quite fit into other existing documents like the *Explore Course* (our new members class), our Statement of Faith (though we include a copy of this below), certain policy documents (like our Child Protection Policy) and the *Book of Church Order of the Sovereign Grace Churches*. We refer to these titles in the Member Handbook and you can obtain a copy by contacting the church office.

*The Elders of Crossway Church  
29 September 2016*

## **The Vision of Crossway Church**

### **THE OVER-ARCHING PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

The over-arching purpose of our church is to glorify God. All that we do is to be done for that grand purpose. The church is to display the wisdom and glory of God to the visible and invisible universe (Eph. 3:10; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:9-10; Rom. 11:36), and the church's good works are to result in God being glorified (Matt. 5:16). The church is even called the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:20-22; cf. Rev. 21:3).

### **THE VISION OF CROSSWAY CHURCH**

Within this over-arching purpose are three core activities that represent the broad biblical responsibilities of the church: we love God through our worship and growth as disciples, love one another through our mutual service, edification, and concern, and we love our neighbors through our evangelism to the lost and our service to the needy.

Our first obligation is to love God through our worship and growth as disciples. To "worship God" (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17; Heb. 12:28-29; 1 Peter 4:10-11) means to proclaim his all-surpassing glory in all that we do individually and corporately as a church. While all of life is to be worship (Rom. 12:1), the high point of our worship is the corporate gathering we experience on Sunday mornings (1 Cor. 14:26ff.; Col. 3:16-17). To "grow as disciples" means that we are growing in character ("fruit of the Spirit," Gal. 5:22-23) and in our care and service for one another (1 John 3:11, 14; John 13:34). This means first that we are committed to our own ongoing spiritual growth. We are pursuing God through Bible-reading and prayer, and we are putting sin to death (Rom. 6:1-5). This is a recognition that we belong to Christ and not to ourselves (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Further, All Christians are endowed by God with specific gifts so that we might benefit others and serve others, and believers should be willing to be used in this way (1 Peter 4:9-10; Eph. 4:7-16; 1 Cor. 12:3-7; Rom. 12:3-8), first to those inside the church and then to those outside: "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). The Bible makes it clear that because of the gifts we have received and the service we are to render, we are in fact involved in the work of ministry. The church is not filled with ministers and non-ministers, because all are ministers. Instead, a church is made up of pastors, deacons and members who all serve (minister) in various ways.

Our second obligation is to "love one another," which means to live together in a vibrant local fellowship as brothers and sisters in Christ. Love is central to all that we do as Christians, and

thus it is a critical part of our life together (1 Cor. 13:1-7; 1 John 4:7-12; etc.). We are not simply collaborators in a common cause or members of the same organization, but we are brothers and sisters adopted into the same family (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; etc.). We are thus living a life marked by affection for one another (1 Pet. 4:8), sacrifice for one another, sharing life's trials and triumphs together, and living out the "one anothers" of the New Testament together. This fellowship also means that we build others up through our speech and actions as we have opportunity (Eph. 4:29; 1 Cor. 8:10; 10:23; 14:4; 1 Thess. 5:11; etc.). This is a goal for each of us as we live life together.

Our third obligation is to "love our neighbors." Jesus taught us that loving our neighbors involves serving those in need around us (Luke 10:36-37). This is part of our calling to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19), because the greatest love we can express to our neighbors is to share the gospel with those who are not yet converted. This starts them on the journey of discipleship. Such disciple-making engages the whole local church since we are each gifted in different aspects of the task.

Finally, loving our neighbor as Jesus taught involves serving those in need. Our Christian life is to extend beyond the walls of the church itself and is also to be marked by good works toward the needy (Luke 10:25-37; Matt. 5:16; Jam. 1:26-27; etc.). Most of these good works will be done in private and individual ways by Christians, but at times the church will facilitate larger efforts to provide for those who are needy in various ways.

### 3

## Joining and Resigning Membership

### REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

To join Crossway Church a person must be:

- 1) A believer;
- 2) Baptized in water as a believer;
- 3) An adult;
- 4) In general agreement with our Statement of Faith; and,
- 5) Willing to support the values, mission, and policies of the church.

Here is a brief look at each of these five requirements:

*1) Membership is for Believers:* Because God's church consists of those who are born-again, it is appropriate for a local church to be limited to those who are born-again. We can see a clear picture of this in places like 1 Corinthians 1:2 where Paul greets the Corinthian church:

*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.*

While we cannot guarantee who is and who is not born-again, we can ask that all those who join Crossway Church be able to give a sincere profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, as a credible evidence of the power of the gospel at work in their lives (Rom. 1:16-17).

*2) Membership is for those baptized in water as believers:* In the New Testament, one of the key markers for a believer is that they are baptized. This does not make someone a believer, it only marks them as such. Jesus said to baptize “disciples” (Matt. 28:19), the clear pattern of Acts is to baptize those who make a profession of faith (8:12; 29-39), and elsewhere the meaning of baptism shows that this is appropriate only for believers (Rom. 6:1-5; 1 Pet. 3:21). Requiring members to be baptized is really a truth related to number one, that a member must be a Christian.

3) *Adult Membership*: Membership at Crossway Church is for adults only. While we certainly believe that children can be converted and vital participants in the church, the responsibilities and service expected of members imply that it is something best reserved for adulthood. As one example, a member is at times required to participate in the church discipline of another member. The wisdom and responsibility this entails mean that it is best if adults are the ones who perform such an action. Further, a child is still under the authority of their parents, and at times the interaction between the authority of the church and parental authority makes it challenging to treat a child as a typical member. Once they are eighteen years old, they are eligible for church membership.

4) *General Agreement with our Statement of Faith*: To join Crossway Church a person must also generally affirm our Statement of Faith. Complete agreement in all details of our doctrine is not practical or necessary, but to be a unified church there must be a basic commonality of doctrine. Otherwise, we will have a hard time working together and growing together as disciples. This "unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13f.) will be in flux until we all have perfect knowledge, but we expect at least a basic unity.

There are core doctrines where there must be unity. These include essential issues like the Trinity, the Bible as the Word of God, or the nature and necessity of salvation. On these issues, if there is disagreement then we can have no confidence the person is even a Christian. However, we can allow for some difference of opinion on issues such as election, spiritual gifts, or church polity. This is what we mean by a *general agreement* with our Statement of Faith.

5) *Willingness to support the values, mission, and policies of Crossway Church*: A person who joins our church must also be willing to support the direction of the church as it is reflected in our values, mission, and policies. Our values are common to all the Sovereign Grace churches and include: (1) Reformed soteriology, (2) gospel-centered expository preaching, (3) Continuationist pneumatology, (4) complementarian leadership in the home and church, (5) elder-governed and elder-led churches, (6) national and international outreach and church planting, and (7) interdependent churches united in fellowship, mission, and governance. You can find out more about these seven shared values in *The Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order* and on the Sovereign Grace blog.<sup>1</sup>

Our mission is to *love God, love one another, and love our neighbor*. This captures the broad categories of our life together. To *love God* includes both our worship and our personal growth as disciples of Christ. To *love one another* includes our fellowship, mutual love, care, and service to our brothers and sisters in this church. To *love our neighbor* involves our service, mercy ministry, and evangelism to those outside the church.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://sovereigngrace.com/sovereign-grace-blog>.

Our church policies include those detailed in *The Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order* as well as our church bylaws, our policy regarding the protection of children, our process of church discipline, and our understanding of pastoral confidentiality. We cover church discipline and confidentiality in Lesson Eight of our *Explore Course*, and our child protection policies are in our *Entrust Manual*.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

There are also responsibilities that come with joining the church. The reason we list these out is that we want you to see what a typical member does in our church. These are all applications of what God commands.

There are five basic responsibilities for church members:

- 1) Regularly attend Sunday morning worship;
- 2) Actively participate in our Caregroup ministry;
- 3) Serve on a ministry team;
- 4) Support the church financially;
- 5) Submit to the leadership of the elders

*1) Regularly attend Sunday morning worship:* The most important meeting of our church takes place as we gather corporately on Sunday mornings. We understand missing occasionally because of things like vacations, sickness, work conflicts, etc., but we expect that schedule- and situation-permitting, members will attend on Sundays. Hebrews 10:25 says not to neglect "to meet together," and the most important meeting we have is the Sunday service. Therefore, our pattern of attendance should reflect our commitment to this biblical priority.

*2) Actively participate in our Caregroup ministry:* Members regularly attend Caregroup meetings, again schedule- and situation-permitting. We need to be intentional in building biblical community, and this is the goal of our Caregroups. These meetings take place 3-4 times a month in someone's home and are a key place for building relationships and living life together as the body of Christ.

*3) Serve on a ministry team:* Members also join ministry team(s), which serve the church in dedicated areas. These are ways that we can take the gifts that God has given us and invest them into the growth of others. Every area of service is necessary, and in each one our goal is to glorify Christ and to love others.

4) *Support the church financially:* We give our money as an act of worship, an expression of gratitude to God, to support church ministers, for the sake of the poor, and to support other churches nationally and internationally (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:25-32; Malachi 3:10; Acts 2:45; 4:34-35; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Tim. 5:3-16; etc.). When we give our money we are giving ourselves, and when we invest our finances in the church we are investing our very heart in God's church (Matt. 6:21). We believe that the Scriptures commend giving a tithe (a tenth) to the church as a starting point for your giving. Offerings can be given beyond this amount as God so leads you.

5) *Submit to the leadership of the elders:* Another biblical responsibility is for church members to submit to their elders. The New Testament says to "obey your leaders and submit to them" (Heb. 13:17). The authority of the elders is grounded in and limited by the Word of God, as they teach us how to live as Christians in this age.

There is a practical side to this as well in matters of the church schedule, basic ministry structures, and the Sunday liturgy. In these practical areas of our church life we expect a basic responsiveness to the leadership of the elders. Further, there should be a basic receptivity to their teaching and input. The elders of a church are the God-given officers to teach, govern, care and protect the church (Acts 20:28f; 1 Tim. 5:17f).

This submission to the elders is reflected in the commitments the congregation voices when an elder is ordained:

- Do you, the people of Crossway Church, receive \_\_\_\_\_ as your pastor?  
*We do.*
- Do you promise to receive the word of truth from him with meekness and love and to submit to him in the due biblical exercise of his leadership? *We do.*
- Do you promise to supply him with whatever material support he may need to fulfill his ministry among you? *We do.*
- Do you promise to encourage him in his labors and to assist his ministry and leadership for your spiritual edification, the evangelization of the lost, and the promotion of God's glory? *We do.*

When someone does not fulfill one or more of these responsibilities, this can be a place for appeals by other members or the elders. Most of the time someone's inability to meet these responsibilities is because of a season-of-life change or a new schedule or some other practical consideration. We understand that we can't all hit these marks all of the time. Yet, there are

occasions when someone's failure in these areas is a sign of a greater problem in their lives, and thus it can become necessary for others to get involved to help them.

## **PRACTICAL STEPS TO BECOME A MEMBER**

The first step to become a member at Crossway Church is to take our *Explore Course*. The purpose of this class is to give a clear sense of what we believe and practice as a church. It is a significant decision to join a church, and we want potential members to make an informed choice.

The second step is to take our *Experience Course*. This class is designed as an introductory Caregroup to give instruction and practice in biblical fellowship. Every member of Crossway Church participates in our Caregroups, and we want all new members to be equipped for full participation in biblical fellowship.

The *Membership Application* should be completed and submitted during either of the courses. The application is a communication tool that helps the pastors to get to know the applicant better and facilitates discussion. Upon receipt of the application, the church office will set up an interview.

Next is the *membership interview*. The point of this interview is to ask questions from materials taught in the classes, and to have a personal interaction before making a final decision. The basic point of this interview is to help to clarify if Crossway Church is the one God is calling the applicant to join.

In most instances, *a person is received as a member upon completion of their pastoral interview*. When one needs to be baptized or other circumstances require, membership may be delayed. At such times our desire is to serve the church and to serve the applicant in the process.

The final step of membership is *New Member Sunday*, when all of the new members are introduced to the church.

## **RESIGNING MEMBERSHIP**

If you would like to resign your membership from Crossway Church, we ask that you would normally pass through these through steps:

- 1) Provide dated, written notice (via letter or email) to the elders that one would like to resign.
- 2) Meet with one of the pastors.
- 3) Receive the formal, written notice of release from the elders.

Within 30 days after the effective date of the membership resignation, one will be removed from the church directory.

Resigning membership may not apply immediately if the member is in the midst of the church discipline process. Sometimes a person leaving still needs to be held to account for his actions even after he has expressed a desire to leave our church. We address this possibility in section 9.5 of our Bylaws.

### **RESIGNATION BY NON-PARTICIPATION**

When someone persistently fails to attend over a period of 6 months, and it is not for some practical limitation like work schedule or health or other temporary hindrance, then the elders may regard this as a "resignation by non-participation." This means that though the person has not walked out the steps to formally resign their membership, he has resigned through his actions. Church membership is an active and ongoing partnership and a commitment to the "one anothers" of the Bible—love one another, serve one another, bear one another's burdens (e.g., Rom. 12:9ff.)—so it does not make sense to call someone a church member who is not active in that membership. In these cases the elders will not take this step quickly, but will likely make a series of appeals to establish the nature of the non-participation.

## **The Statement of Faith of Sovereign Grace Churches**

We are connected to Sovereign Grace Churches, Inc., and so our Statement of Faith is the same as theirs.<sup>2</sup>

### **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 to mankind. 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 from 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.

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<sup>2</sup> As found at: <http://sovereigngrace.com/statement-of-faith>. Accessed 17 May 2016.

## **JESUS CHRIST<sup>3</sup>**

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 40 days appeared to more than 500 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 worshiped 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.

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<sup>3</sup> There are several oddities in this paragraph that are currently undergoing review by Sovereign Grace Churches. One is the use of the past tense in places like, "was the eternal Word made flesh." This is confusing and should read, "is the eternal Word." Also, to say that he is "perfect in nature" gives the impression that Jesus had only one nature, not two. We affirm what the historic creeds of the church have affirmed, which is that Jesus Christ is one person in two natures, one human and one divine. The intention of the "Jesus Christ" paragraph above is not to be in any way unorthodox or to conflict with this footnote. It's just that the language chosen is unusual and confusing.

## **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 exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12 ESV). 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 intended only 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.

## The Corporate Worship of the Church

### THE PRIORITY OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

The New Testament establishes the priority of corporate worship in the local church. We are not to neglect "to meet together, as is the habit of some," but we are to be "encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:25). Further, throughout the New Testament we see by example (Acts 2:41ff.) and commandment (Heb. 10:25) that we are to meet together regularly as a local church. As Christians have practiced since the first-century, we meet weekly on "the first day of the week" (1 Cor. 16:2), also called "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10).

### THE GOALS OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

During this time of "coming together" (1 Cor. 11:17; 14:26; etc.) we are primarily focused on the priority of glorifying God (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). Yet, this goal includes within it the aim of "building up" our brothers and sisters in Christ. In fact, Paul says to "let all things [in the corporate meeting] be done for building up" (1 Cor. 14:26).

We also see the evangelization of the lost as one of the goals of our Sunday meeting (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 2:22ff.). As the word is preached, praises are sung, and Christians demonstrate their faith, the gospel is being presented to the lost in our midst. We desire to see God's Spirit bless this gospel proclamation with conversions.

### THE ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

The corporate worship of the local church contains many elements that are to be regularly a part of our services. These cannot be included in every service, but they are to be included on a regular basis.

The list of the elements of our corporate worship includes the following:

*Reading, preaching, teaching, and hearing the Bible* (Deut. 31:10-12; Neh. 8; 1 Tim. 4:11, 13; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Jam. 1:22-25). Because this is a primary activity throughout all eras of the people of God in the Bible, it must always remain a priority for Crossway Church and its leaders.

*Corporate and individual prayer* (Neh. 9; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1-2, 8). Corporate and individual prayer is a hallmark of the corporate gatherings of the people of God throughout the Bible and should be a regular component of our gatherings as well. This includes formal liturgical prayers, pastoral prayers, corporate intercession, thanksgiving, commissioning and prayers of all kinds

that occur in our meetings.

*Singing, musical accompaniment, and physical expressions of worship (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:18-21; Col. 3:16; Pss. 47:1; 149:3; 150; etc.).* God's people have always sung of his attributes and redemption (cf. Ex. 15; Rev. 5:9-10), and we desire for this to mark our weekly meeting with very few exceptions. Further, the Bible commands us to use instruments and includes a variety of physical expressions like clapping, dancing, raising our hands, and more to be a part of the praise of our great God.

*Spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:26-30).* The expectation of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14 is that our corporate gatherings would be times where the Holy Spirit manifests himself through various spiritual gifts. He also commands us to "earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:1), and he creates the expectation that when we gather many would have contributions to make in the corporate meeting (1 Cor. 14:26). Elsewhere he says not to "quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). So, even as we pursue an appropriate order and spiritual discernment in our meetings (1 Cor. 14:26ff.; 1 Thess. 5:21-22), we want our meetings to be marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit, as he saves and sanctifies God's people.

*Collecting tithes and offerings for the ministry of the church, the poor, churches in need, and various aspects of our local and extra-local mission (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:25-32; Mal. 3:10; Acts 2:45; 4:34-35; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Tim. 5:3-16; Matt. 28:18-20).* We worship God by giving our financial resources for his purposes. The work of ministry is to be funded by members giving sacrificially. The needy in our church and the poor in our community are to be ministered to by our giving. Gospel outreach is to be funded by local churches providing for ministers of the gospel to give themselves full-time to making disciples of all nations.

*The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-30; Matt. 26:17ff.; Mark 14:12ff. Luke 22:7ff.).* Few corporate worship elements are highlighted in the New Testament, so the ones that are demand special recognition. The Lord's Supper is one of these. We celebrate the Lord's Supper with an open table (open to all baptized believers who are in good standing in their churches) on a regular basis. We do this to remember the sacrifice of our Lord (Luke 22:19), to recognize our unity in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 11:29), to proclaim Christ's redemptive sacrifice and his return (1 Cor. 11:26), to participate in his death (1 Cor. 10:16-21), and to reflect on his presence among us and our inclusion in him (John 6:51; Romans 6:1-5).

*Individual and corporate confessions of faith (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 1 Tim. 3:16).* In the context of baptisms we often hear public professions of faith. As part of our corporate worship we occasionally read historic creeds or other confessions of faith.

*Baptism of believers (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 16:29-33; Rom. 6:1-7).* While it is not explicitly required that baptisms be practiced in the corporate meeting, we see it as best fulfilling the symbolism and intent as explained in the NT. We baptize new Christians in part to represent their union with the Body of Christ, and that message is best conveyed when the church gathers on a Sunday.

*Ordinations of elders and deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).* The ordination of various officers into their respective ministries at Crossway Church happens in the Sunday meeting. Deacons and elders are ordained as they are needed in the life of the church.

*Expressions of fellowship such as personal greetings and the informal care that happens as we meet (Rom. 16:16; Jam. 2:1-4; 1 Pet. 5:14).* Sunday meetings are not just a collection of activities that we perform, but they are the coming together of brothers and sisters in Christ that God has joined in the household of God. Therefore, we see these gatherings as times to express affection toward one another, to greet others, and to minister to various needs as we are able to in the context of the weekly meeting.

How these activities are practiced will largely reflect Christian prudence and practical wisdom, but the goal is to see these clear, biblical practices represented in our meetings. Some of these are practiced virtually every week (preaching God's word, singing God's praises, prayer, giving financially). Others are practiced regularly (Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts). Others occur less often and typically as needed (baptisms, ordinations, confessions of faith).

## Elders at Crossway Church

### INTRODUCTION

Because of the variety of approaches to the office of elder, it is important for us to clarify a few things about this role at Crossway Church. In some churches the pastor is a virtual monarch, while in others he is little more than a spokesperson for a deacon board. Some churches place final authority in the hands of a regional bishop, but others see the congregation as having final authority for decisions and judgments. So what about Crossway Church? How is our church governed? That's what we want to look at here.

### WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY?

One important question when it comes to governing the church is, *who has the authority?* That is, in the final analysis, who really has the final say in a given decision? Historically, the church has given four answers to this question.

Some church traditions feel final authority rests with the *bishop*, a person in a given denomination who has authority over a number of other churches. This is called an *episcopal* form of government and is perhaps the oldest form. The Episcopal, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Church all adopt this church government. Local pastors have authority, but the bishop has a greater authority.

Other churches feel final authority is in the hands of the *congregation* itself, and historically they are called *congregational* churches. This authority is typically exercised through all-member votes. In these churches there are differences about which matters are voting matters and which ones are worked out through other means, but they all affirm that the congregation is the highest level of authority in the church. Baptist and Anabaptist churches of various kinds adopt this understanding.

A smaller segment of the church has said authority rests in the hands of *apostles*. This is actually the history of the Sovereign Grace Churches until 2013, at least officially. Apostles in this government are not at all equated with the original Twelve or Paul, but would be similar to men like Timothy, Titus, and Silas in the Bible. There is some similarity with an episcopal government, but it is only a superficial likeness. The role of bishop and that of an apostle in this type of government are quite different. Some Charismatic and Pentecostal denominations adopt the office of apostle in this qualified sense.

The fourth type of government, and the one we adopted in April of 2013, sees the *elder* as having the primary place of authority within the church. Such churches are called *presbyterian* after the Greek word *presbuteros* for "elder" (cf. Acts 15:6). This doesn't mean we are identical with traditional Presbyterian denominations. Those churches are generally cessationist, affirm the entire Westminster Confession of Faith, practice paedobaptism (baptizing infants), and have a strong division between teaching and ruling elders. We are continuationist, affirm only parts (though large parts) of the Westminster Confession of Faith, practice credobaptism (the baptism of believers only), and see all elders as having an equivalent office.

Our common ground with Presbyterians is our belief in a church government built around the office of elder. Because of its importance in our church and denomination we need to explain what we mean by "elder."

### **THE OFFICE OF ELDER**

There are three terms the New Testament uses to describe the role of "elder." Sometimes people divide these into at least two different positions in the church, but they are really three ways of describing the same office.

An elder is most often called by that name, "elder" (Grk. *presbuteros*). Titus was told to "appoint elders in every town" (1:5) and is then given specific prerequisites for those elders (vv. 6-9). Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders...in every church" in their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). The title "elder" speaks to the wisdom and character of the leader of God's church. It refers more to the caliber of the man than his precise age, though age is one factor in whether to choose a man or not. The role was a critical one in the Old Testament, though it was never fully defined (Ex. 3:16; Jer. 26:17; 29:1; etc.).

Elders are also called by the name of "overseer" (Grk., *episkopos*). In fact, in Titus 1:5-9 where Titus is told to "appoint elders," Paul then says "an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach" (v. 7). Similarly in 1 Timothy 3:1, Paul uses the title "overseer" instead of "elder." This title speaks to the way an elder is to lead Christ's church. In fact, the Bible says they are to "rule well" (1 Tim. 5:17), and the church is to "submit to them" (Heb. 13:17).

Another title of great importance for the elder is that of "pastor" (Grk., *poimēn*). The word really means a "shepherd," something captured in the ESV in Ephesians 4:11: "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers." A shepherd cares for, protects, feeds, knows, and provides for his sheep, and this accurately captures the kind of concerned leadership an elder is to provide in his church. Thus, the elders are commanded to "shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (NASB, Acts 20:28). We know these three titles and roles are synonymous from passages like Acts 20. In verse 17 Luke tells us that Paul "called the elders of the church to come to him, and then in verse 28 he exhorts

them, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for [shepherd] the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." These elders are overseers who shepherd their flock. Thus, a pastor is an elder is an overseer.

Elders in the New Testament are given four basic responsibilities in the church. They are to teach (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17), lead or rule (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4), protect (Acts 20:28-31), and love (1 Pet. 5:1-4) the church. As Paul makes very clear, the church does not belong to the elders, though they exercise leadership in the church. The church belongs to God himself: "Care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). One point of confusion is to think that since elders are the official leaders in the church, they do most or even all of the ministry in the church. This is simply not true! In fact, God says a healthy church is filled with ministers.

This vision of a healthy church body has captured our imagination and our ministry philosophy. It means that while elders are vital to a healthy church, they are by no means the primary workers in the ministry of that church. All are required to serve if the body is to grow up to full maturity. Now what kind of person is to be an elder? Can anyone sign up for this role? Not exactly. We learn from the New Testament an elder is to be a man of character, gifting, and leadership. That he is to be a man is affirmed in places like 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-7; and Titus 1:5-9. The need for gifting and leadership flows out of what he does—teach, lead, protect, and love the church. The need for character we learn from two clear passages, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9:

*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. (1 Tim. 3:1-7)*

*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. (Titus 1:5-9)*

This is a sobering picture because it identifies a number of ways a man will either not qualify for the office or can be removed from the office. Yet, here as in all things, we dare not be smarter than God. He has told us clearly what we are to look for in our elders, and we need to rest in his revelation.

## **ORDAINING ELDERS AT CROSSWAY CHURCH**

The ordination of elders at Crossway Church happens according to the process detailed in "The Ordination of Elders" in our *Book of Church Order of the Sovereign Grace Churches* (BCO-9). The process is designed to help a local church identify, evaluate, and train a man to serve as an elder. It involves the leadership of the local elders, the input of the congregation, and the evaluation and approval of the Regional Assembly of Elders. Once a man is identified as an "elder candidate" he will begin a training regimen that is detailed in the current ordination standards of Sovereign Grace. His character and gifting are examined primarily by the local elders. It is in the area of sound doctrine where the Regional Assembly offers specific examinations, and they must also affirm that the man is not engaged in any scandalous sin. The congregation offers general and informal input about the elder candidate, and at a certain point in the process the elders will allow for more formal input. The congregation does not have the final voice of approval, but it is wise and helpful to get their perspective on a leader that will have such a significant role in their lives in the church. Once the candidate has completed the training program, passed his ordination exams, the congregation has given their input, and the Regional Assembly has approved the candidate, then the man can be ordained on a Sunday morning at Crossway Church.

In fact, we can learn about the role of elder by reading the commitments that elders make when they are ordained (the answer to each question being, "I do"):

- *Do you promise to shepherd the flock of God not under compulsion but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge but being an example to the flock? (1 Pet. 5:1-4)*
- *Do you promise to faithfully guard the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you an overseer, and do you promise to protect that flock from false teaching, division, and dissension? (Acts 20:28-31)*
- *Do you promise to care for the flock of God, not as a hireling, but as an under shepherd of the Great Shepherd, caring for his sheep as the precious ones for whom he died? (Ezek. 34)*

- *Do you, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and this congregation, promise to preach the Word in season and out of season, and do you promise to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience, enduring suffering, while remaining sober-minded in all of your preaching and teaching, and will you do the work of an evangelist among those whom God has given you charge? (2 Tim. 4:1-5)*
- *Do you declare sincerely before God that you believe all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith fully agree with the Scriptures? Do you own that Statement as the statement and confession of your faith? And do you promise to teach and defend these doctrines in public and private?*
- *Do you promise further that if in the future you come to have reservations about any of these doctrines, you will share these reservations with your eldership and the Regional Assembly of Elders?*
- *Do you promise to keep a close watch on yourself and to walk humbly before others, to be self-suspicious of your own motives, to invite criticism from others, and to make yourself accountable to those whom God has put in your life?*
- *Do you submit without exception to the explicitly mandated practices of the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order, affirming that that form of government is a wise and suitable application of Scriptural principles?*
- *Do you promise to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel and to show yourself in all respects, in action and in speech, to be a model of good works, integrity, and dignity so that neither the church, nor our Savior Jesus Christ, nor the gospel may be brought into reproach? (Titus 2:7-8)*
- *Do you promise to continually seek the gifts of the Spirit that you might serve God's people, not in the energy of the flesh, but in the power of the Holy Spirit and to carry out your ministry without fear of man?*

## Deacons at Crossway Church<sup>4</sup>

### THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON DEACONS

There are numerous passages in the New Testament that use the Greek term *diakonos* and its cognates (Rom. 16:1, Eph. 6:21, Col. 1:7, Col. 4:7, Phil. 1:1, Acts 6:1-6). The word “deacon” (διάκονος) simply means “servant” or “minister.” In one sense, all God’s people are called as “ministers” or “deacons.” However, there is an official role for some to share that is designated with the title of “deacon.” Although many passages give us a sense that a deacon is a mature servant of the local church, the clearest passage on the qualifications and call of deacons is 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

*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.*

What is clear from this passage is that the deacon occupies a significant office in the church. The qualifications are high, as is the promise of reward. As one of the two offices of the New Testament church, deacons are esteemed servants. This is a significant role, given by God for the good of his church.

#### *Deacons and Elders*

The New Testament provides two offices instituted by God for the care and leadership of his church. Elders are those men called of God and recognized by the church to provide leadership through *teaching* and *governance*. They are to rightly handle God’s word (2 Tim 2:15), so that the saints may be equipped for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12). Elders shepherd God’s flock as undershepherds (1 Pet 5:1-5), caring for those given to their charge, and for whom they will give account (Heb 13:17).

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<sup>4</sup> See our *Deacon Manual* (available from the church office) for fuller detail on deacons and their functions at Crossway Church.

Deacons, on the other hand, are not called to govern or teach, but to *serve*. They are exemplary servants in the church, caring for the needs of God's people as a visible and tangible expression of the love of God. This mutual care among God's people has marked the church from its earliest days (cf. Acts 4:34-36). Further, they free up the elders to "devote ourselves to prayer and to ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

One error we wish to avoid is to see elders as concerned with spiritual goals, and deacons as concerned with temporal matters. Such a division is artificial and is nowhere encouraged in the New Testament. Both elders and deacons care for God's people spiritually and physically. They work together to see God's church walk in mature love toward God and toward one another.

### *Purpose of Deacons*

Scripture does not provide great detail on the function of deacons. Some hold that the office is devoted primarily to meeting the temporal needs of the church. Others hold that the office involves any service that frees up the pastors to govern the church and devote themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:2-4). There is a diversity of practice in Sovereign Grace Churches. At Crossway, we see the emphasis for deacons as focused on mercy ministries and benevolence, though there does seem to be latitude for involving deacons in other affairs of the church.

The character requirements in 1 Timothy 3 indicate the spiritual maturity the role demands and underline its significance for the life of the church (cf. Phil. 1:1). Deacons are not required to be able to teach, nor are they given the responsibility of church governance; those roles fall to elders/pastors/overseers. However, deacons can greatly bolster and support the role of the elders and the health of the congregation. They can do this by assuming responsibility for the leadership and care of the congregation in many areas in order to free elders to better lead in the ministry of the Word and prayer.

### *Women and the Diaconate*

We wholeheartedly affirm the vital importance of the ministry of women in our church, and we encourage their involvement in many ministry positions. Scripture presents many portraits of women as esteemed servants among God's people. However, given the broader Scriptural witness to God's good design in the complementary roles of men and women, we believe that it is not appropriate to appoint women to serve as deacons. That is, women cannot hold ordained

office in the church.<sup>5</sup> However, the wives of deacons and other godly and gifted women in the church may certainly serve in many capacities under the direction of the deacons, in caring for the practical needs of the church and so furthering our love one for another.

### *Categories of Service*

One of the difficulties in deciphering the NT teaching on deacons is in understanding their role(s). If Acts 6 is taken as referring to deacons, then mercy ministry and benevolence are clearly within their purview. But other than that reference, very little information is given as to what a deacon is called by God to do. If we mirror-read the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3, then it would appear that the value placed on the character qualities of a deacon, specifically in how he manages his home and finances, are designed to make him a worthy counselor for others who face struggles in those areas.

Historically, many churches have placed deacons in charge of more “secular” matters, such as church finances and building administration. While there is some wisdom in this arrangement, it can also tend to promote the sacred/secular divide that we mentioned above. Every sphere of service, even in administrative matters, is a spiritual service to God and for his people. It is vital that everyone placed in a leadership position in God’s church view his responsibilities as a spiritual charge before God and for the good of his people.

Within Crossway, deacons focus on the welfare of the church by overseeing benevolence funds, organizing service activities, and generally seeking to care for the church and to free up the elders for pastoral ministry. This service may also include mercy ministry within our community, and financial counseling, all of which is aimed at fulfilling the biblical admonition of Galatians 6:10:

*So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

Deacons may be called upon in other areas; and depending on a man’s gifting, a deacon may also be called upon to teach or to lead a ministry team. However, the areas outlined above are those that we see as having biblical priority in the church.

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<sup>5</sup> Some churches in Sovereign Grace recognize women as deacons, but do not ordain them. While this position is allowable within our shared *Book of Church Order*, we believe it is more biblically-consistent to retain the link between the office and ordination.

## **Raising up Deacons**

### *Nomination & Affirmation*

There are two ways to begin the nomination process for potentially serving as a deacon. The first is for a member of Crossway to nominate a man, using the nomination form below. The second is for the pastors to approach a man about serving. In addition, if you have a strong desire to serve and are not nominated, please approach a pastor to discuss your desire to serve.

Once a man has been nominated, the elders will vet the nomination. This may include internal discussions, an interview, discussions with church members, and evaluation of a man's service in the church and leadership in the home. If the man comes through this process and is affirmed as a candidate, he will be asked to participate in the training program.

### *Training & Evaluation*

In 1 Tim 3, Paul instructs Timothy regarding deacons, *“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...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.”* So deacons are to be evaluated both for their character and for their theology. All leadership in the church is inescapably theological, and for men to serve as deacons, they will be called to give tangible expression to the theological truths they hold dear.

Therefore, before a man is called upon to serve as a deacon at Crossway, he will ordinarily pass through several steps.

#### Step 1: Membership

A man must be a baptized member of Crossway, in good standing, in order to be considered for the role of deacon. He must also be actively involved in service and consistently participating on Sundays and in Caregroup.

#### Step 2: Men's Discipleship Course (MDC)

As a foundational step of discipleship, the diaconal candidate must have completed the MDC before beginning diaconal training. This course focuses on Christian growth through the spiritual disciplines. The elders may approve an exception to this requirement on a per-case basis.

### Step 3: Leadership Training Course (LTC)

As a follow-up to the Men's Discipleship Course, the LTC focuses on leadership in God's church. This course is focused on training men for ministry in many areas in the church, as well as in the home. It is a pre-requisite for service in many capacities in the church, including the diaconate.

### Step 4: Diaconal Training Course (DTC)

Because a deacon is an esteemed servant in the church, he must be well-trained for the role. The Diaconal Training Course is an 8-month, twice-a-month course of training and discipleship where participants will grow theologically and learn how to apply the truths of the gospel to the practical needs of the church.

Participants will read, discuss, and apply several books, as well as engaging in regular practical and theological discussions with the pastors. At the conclusion of the course, participants will submit a final paper and take a test based on the contents of the course.

### Step 5: Deacon-in-Training (DIT)

Upon successful completion of the DTC, diaconal candidates may move on to the final training phase in the process. They will become Deacons-in-Training, and will enter into a 1-year period of ongoing training, as well as beginning to serve in diaconal roles.

The Deacon-in-Training Course is an 8-month, once-a-month course of training and discipleship. It will continue the process begun in the DTC. During the course, the Deacons-in-Training will also meet on diaconal matters, and may be called upon to engage in mercy and benevolence ministries from time to time.

Near the conclusion of the year, they will also be evaluated according to the 1 Timothy 3 qualifications for a deacon. If they pass this evaluation, the church will be given an opportunity to comment upon the fitness of the man for the office.

## *Ordination*

If a man completes all training and testing requirements, the elders may then decide to ordain the man and to install him in the role of deacon. He will be presented before the church on a Sunday morning, the elders will lay hands on and pray for him (cf. Acts 6:6), and he will be recognized as an official deacon of Crossway, dedicated to the service of the church. Ordination as a deacon does not convey governance powers (as per an elder), but is a call to significant service and a recognition of God's work of grace in a man's life.

Here are the commitments that these deacons make when they are commissioned:

*Gentlemen, at the end of the description of the commitments, you will answer, "I do."*

*A deacon must be a man of character. 1 Timothy 3:8-9 says that "deacons...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." 1 Timothy 3:12 says that a deacon must live a life of marital fidelity and manage his household well. Acts 6:3 says that a deacon must be both "full of the Spirit" and "full of wisdom."*

*Further, a deacon must fulfill his role with faithfulness. In Acts 6:1-7 the deacons were entrusted with the responsibility to serve the Hellenist widows in the distribution of food. It was a task they were to own responsibly. It was delegated to them, and they had responsibility to see it accomplished according to their own judgment and leadership.*

*Additionally, a deacon is called to serve the church for the glory of God. 1 Peter 4:10-11 says that we serve others with grace given to us so that "God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" and that "glory and dominion" are due to him "forever and ever."*

*Therefore, in light of the kind of man a deacon is to be and the dedication to his ministry that he is to model, do you now commit yourself to fulfill this task with faithfulness, integrity, diligence, and a reliance on God's grace and the Holy Spirit?*

*"I DO."*

## 8

### **Pastoral Confidentiality**

From Section 9.7 of our Bylaws:

Though every reasonable effort shall be made to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a pastoral counseling context, there will be times when to properly fulfill their spiritual and leadership responsibilities, the Church's elders may, as they deem necessary or appropriate, share confidential information with one another, Church members, civil authorities, or others they deem may be part of the solution or problem. They may do this for the purpose of counsel or the purpose of protecting others from the effects of a Church member's sin, or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the people of the Church.

Related to this, certain situations require that a pastor report information to the authorities. Pennsylvania law states that:<sup>6</sup>

A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.

The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.

A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.

An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from: <http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/faqs/index.htm>, which contains a helpful FAQ on the updated PA Child Abuse Laws. Accessed 9 June 2016.

It is not possible to write a policy that captures every contingency, but our desire is to involve the authorities as much and as quickly as seems warranted in a situation. The safety and welfare of our children is a concern that overrides a person's privacy and our desire to preserve confidentiality. We recognize that our civil authorities are not perfect, but as obedient Christians we submit to their authority when it does not conflict with our obligation to God (Rom. 13:1-7; Acts 3:19; 5:29). We also recognize that we are often trying to balance the fact that our knowledge and wisdom are imperfect with the need to act as quickly as possible. These exceptions notwithstanding, our desire is to value the confidentiality that should exist between a pastor and a member of his church.

A final area where a pastor might share information is when it seems likely that the person will harm himself or someone else. This could include a person expressing that he has considered suicide. These areas are often grey with respect to the law, but our moral obligation binds us to act for the safety and well-being of the person and others involved. At such times we see calling 9-1-1 (or another appropriate person or authority) as a way to serve and love people in need.

As we said above, the motivation to act in these cases is Christian love. Though protecting privacy is often the path of love, there are times when seeking counsel or alerting the authorities is the more appropriate way to express love for our neighbor.

## Our Practice of Church Discipline<sup>7</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

The word "discipline" has a variety of meanings in the text of the Bible. We are to "discipline" our children (Eph. 6:4). Paul says to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7, NASB). God himself "disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives" (Heb. 12:6; Prov. 3:11-12). In these passages the authors mean that some kind of negative pressure or consequence should be applied to someone so that he or she might become more holy. In fact, the goal of all discipline is *holiness*.

Thus, discipline refers to the correction brought when a person sins. It can be personal and direct as in the case of a parent and child. But discipline can also be indirect and broad, something that theologians speak of as "formative discipline." This happens through the teaching or discipleship ministry of the church. As an example, a person might hear a Sunday sermon that becomes a tool of God's correction for him.<sup>8</sup> We even use the term "spiritual disciplines" to refer to personal Bible reading, prayer, fasting, and various other practices because these all have a kind of corrective or training effect in our life. They help us to battle sin and they train us in godliness—even as they serve in the very positive way of building our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Further, there are numerous ways that Christians are to appeal to other Christians in a corrective fashion with the aim of growing in holiness. The author of Hebrews warns us, "Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (3:12). This is a ministry that we exercise to "one another" and we do it "every day." It isn't a formal process, just the healthy give-and-take that is to occur regularly in a church committed to holiness.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on the discipline of both elders and members, please refer to the "Rules of Discipline" in the *Book of Church Order of the Sovereign Grace Churches*. These sections describe various elements of charges against elders and how appeals by church members can be made.

Helpful resources: Jay Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986); Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 145-156; "Guidelines for Formal Discipline" (obtained on March 4, 2014 at <http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.5474599/>); Jonathan Leeman, "A Church Discipline Primer," obtained at <http://www.9marks.org/journal/church-discipline-primer#print-preview> on September 5, 2012 and *Church Discipline: How the Church Protects the Name of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); "Steps in the Institution of Judicial Process" (Book of Discipline, chap. III), *The Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (2000); Mark Dever, *Guarding One Another: Church Discipline* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), pp. 167ff.; Robert K. Cheong, *God Redeeming His Bride: A Handbook for Church Discipline* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Ltd., 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Leeman, 27.

Some authors call this "informal discipline" to distinguish it from an official process that can ultimately lead to excommunication.<sup>9</sup> Most sins that Christians commit will be treated in this manner. They are serious and hurtful to us, but they aren't serious enough to have us removed from the church and its fellowship.

All the above can loosely be called "church discipline," because it is corrective in nature and occurs within the church. Yet, the phrase also refers to the formal process of appeal and rebuke that can ultimately result in excommunication. This formal process has historically been called "church discipline" and is likely what most people envision when they hear the phrase.

The key text for this process is Matthew 18:15-17. This passage begins by a personal appeal from one Christian to another. Then we take "one or two others" along to establish and widen the appeal. Finally, we involve "the church," which in this more common way means involving the elders of the church. Each time we widen the appeal if there is a lack of response (no discernible repentance). And each time the goal is the same, the holiness of the offender. The rest of this chapter will develop this aspect of church discipline and explain how it is to occur at Crossway Church.

## **THE GOALS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

We need to start with a clear statement about the goals of church discipline lest we mistakenly assume that the intent is to shame or simply punish someone. In fact, the goal is not punishment at all. The goals of church discipline are fourfold.

1) The first goal of church discipline is *to bring a sinner to repentance*. In the words of Matthew 18, the goal is to "gain your brother" (v. 15). Thus, the desire of the church in this process is the spiritual health of the offender and his true fullness of life in Christ. It is a rescue mission attempting to save the sinner from the clutches of his sin: "My brother, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

2) The second goal is *to protect the health, spiritual purity, relational harmony, and biblical faithfulness of Crossway Church*. Sin left unchecked can do great harm to a church. This is why the apostle Paul said, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). Further, we desire to be a people who are marked by the same holiness that we see in God himself: "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). Rightly responding to sin is also a powerful encouragement for other believers in our church: people see the seriousness of sin and that we as a church take sin seriously, and both can be significant deterrents from sin that will protect and purify the other members of the church.

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<sup>9</sup> E.g., Jay E. Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline*, 46ff.

3) The third goal of church discipline is *to protect our witness to the world*. Jesus told the apostles that “by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Our lifestyle (love in this case) demonstrates our discipleship. The way that we live communicates the God we serve. And what is true in how we love each other is true in our holiness as well. We reflect God to the lost world around us, and we want that reflection to be as accurate and undistracted (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6-8).

4) The fourth goal of church discipline is *to glorify God*. When we pursue biblical obedience, personal holiness, and corporate purity, we are not after creating a name for ourselves. We are desiring the glory of God: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).<sup>10</sup>

As you can see from the above, punishing a sinner is never the goal with church discipline.

### **SINS WORTHY OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

One question to consider is which sins are grounds for church discipline. Not all sins are worthy of removing someone from the local church. We all commit sins routinely (1 John 1:8-10), and some of these will likely never stop this side of eternity. We will all be proud, self-righteous, and angry at times, but this does not mean that church discipline is necessarily required.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 we are given a list of sins that can lead to excommunication if someone persists in them:

*I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."*

Paul says we are "not to associate" with someone who calls himself a Christian and yet continues these practices. This gives us guidance about what constitutes a sin that is worthy of church discipline: "sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler" (v. 11). These sins destroy the person and those around them, as well as their Christian testimony, and therefore church discipline is appropriate if they continue without change or repentance.

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<sup>10</sup> These points were influenced by Mark Dever, *Guarding One Another: Church Discipline*, 15.

Further, Titus 3:10 identifies another sin that can rise to this level of offense:

*As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him.*

Paul does not duplicate the steps of Matthew 18:15-17, but the progression of "once and then twice," followed by "have nothing more to do with him" seems to imply at least some progression. Perhaps the shortened process has to do with the serious harm a truly divisive person can do to a church. The critical point here is what is meant by "stirs up division." Disagreement, even passionate disagreement, cannot be what is meant. Rather, it seems to picture some disagreement within the church that carries with it a rallying of others to support it as a faction. It is establishing a rival party to those in authority in the church. The reason for the strong response here is that such discord can profoundly damage a church. This kind of divisiveness is universally condemned throughout the New Testament (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 11:18; Titus 1:10-16).

In sum, sins that threaten the holiness or unity of the church in a significant way are instances when (formal) church discipline can be appropriate.<sup>11</sup>

## **THE PROCESS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

As in all areas of church discipline, the Bible and biblical wisdom inform the process. A central passage here is Matthew 18:15-17:

*"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."*

This process begins with a personal appeal and progresses to excommunication if the offender does not repent of their sin. It is essential to see this as a process that unfolds over time, with patience, wisdom and justice preserved along the way. This process begins with a "one-on-one" appeal, progresses to include "one or two others," and finally involves "the church." Jesus does

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<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Leeman offers a helpful summary of when church discipline becomes appropriate: "Somewhere there is a line in between sins that you expect of Christians, and sins which make you think that someone may not be a Christian. Informal and private discipline occurs on both sides of the line, to be sure. But formal church discipline or excommunication is warranted, broadly speaking, when an individual crosses from the first domain to the second, from sins we expect to sins we don't" (*Church Discipline: How the Church Protects the Name of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 49). Cf. Galatians 5:19-21 for a further list of sins that call into question a profession of Christian faith.

not detail a procedure in these few sentences, but he does establish a clear picture of a gradual and progressive widening of involvement that only goes further if there is no repentance on the part of the sinner. In other words, true repentance stops the process, and persistent unrepentance requires that the process continue.

We should also note that some sins require immediate action on the part of the elders.<sup>12</sup> For instance, we would not expect a case of alleged adultery to pass gradually from personal appeal to "one or two others," etc. Rather, the elders would be involved immediately. Paul envisions this kind of action in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 where private appeals are bypassed and the church is to immediately "deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (v. 5):

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*

In other words, he is to be removed from the fellowship ("Let him who has done this be removed from among you," v. 2). This is due to the public and clearly sinful behavior of the man (cf. v. 1).

Titus 3:10-11 envisions an abbreviated process as well, likely because there is a clear threat to the unity of the church:

*As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. It would seem that these warnings—"once and then twice"—are coming from the church's leadership, because Titus is written to a church leader himself, not the church-at-large. This also protects the process from becoming some version of vigilante justice. The reason for such swift and decisive action is the damage and destruction that disunity can bring to a church.*

Even though the New Testament envisions times when immediate and strong action is required elders are still obligated to withhold judgment until the facts are known. Everyone is to be given due process before serious actions are taken. We must always allow that there can be mitigating factors that make the apparent sin less evil than we expect. This does not mean the elders should

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline*, 67.

be timid or unnecessarily slow in their response, but only that as they enter into the situation they need to prioritize justice in the gathering of the facts.

If church discipline is to occur in the normal manner and not an abbreviated one, then it will proceed as follows:

### **STEP ONE: ONE-ON-ONE**

The first step of church discipline actually occurs in an informal manner. Jesus simply says, "if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone" (Matt. 18:15). At this point we are in the realm of the brotherly give-and-take mentioned above. For that reason, to call it a "step" of church discipline is a bit overstated. Yet, we place it here to make sure that this has happened before there is any further action. It would not be right for the elders or the "one or two others" to get involved before this private encounter has occurred.

The point of this meeting is for the one offended to clearly communicate what they believe the offender has done. How exactly did "your brother sin against you"? That is the basic content of what is communicated. The offender should be given a chance to respond in case it is all a misunderstanding. The hope is that "he listens to you," in which case the matter is resolved (Matt. 18:15). This means that the offender agrees with the appeal and repents, or that the offended party realizes his error and withdraws the accusation.

There may be times that the person offended in the situation may not necessarily deliver the private rebuke. There are a number of reasons why an advocate on behalf of the offended party might deliver the rebuke. If the sin is against a child or in some situations involving a man and a woman or there is something in the relationship that puts the two parties on unequal standing,<sup>13</sup> then it might be prudent to have someone go along with the offended party to make sure that they are fairly heard.

Further, some matters have an additional civil dimension to them. If the alleged sin is actually a crime (domestic violence, child abuse, vandalism, stealing, etc.), then local authorities might be involved in addition to church members or the elders. It would be impossible to detail all procedures for all possibilities. For the sake of this document, we want simply to acknowledge this aspect of discipline cases. Most discipline will be a matter of church members only.

Returning to our process, Jesus said, "if he listens to you, you have gained your brother." If this happens the matter is resolved. "If he does not listen," the process proceeds to the next step (Matt. 18:16).

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<sup>13</sup> As an example, if someone believes his much older pastor has sinned against him there might be a sense of intimidation in going to him to "tell him his fault" (Matt. 18:15). Perhaps there shouldn't be, but in the event that there is, it would be wise for the offended party to ask an appropriate person for help (their Caregroup leader, parent, older man in the church, etc.).

## **STEP TWO: ONE OR TWO OTHERS**

If the offender does not respond appropriately, the process goes to step two. Matthew 18:16 says that if our brother does not respond to the private rebuke we are to "take one or two others along with you." These should be Christian men or women who are respected by both parties and the church as well (as they may be called upon to give testimony to the elders). Jesus does not specify whether this person is a church officer (deacon or elder) or not, so we are free to involve whomever we think will be a wise, discerning, humble, and biblical support.

There are four basic roles these "one or two others" can fulfill:

*First*, they can be eyewitnesses who may have personally witnessed the sin committed. In this case they are not only appealing on behalf of the offended party, but they are appealing as brothers or sisters in Christ who desire to see a fellow Christian rescued from his sin.

*Second*, they may not have observed the sin but are concerned it may have occurred and is serious. Here they bring added godly appeal to call the sinner to repentance. As in the case above, they are appealing as brothers and sisters in Christ, only this time they are not appealing as eyewitnesses.

*Third*, they may play an investigative role. They may be coming to determine if the charge is indeed credible and what kind of response is thus demanded. Accordingly, in this step there should be opportunity for the offender to state clearly their side of the story and for the accuser to do the same. In the process of the conversation it is assumed that there will be sufficient clarity that the "one or two others" can make a decision about whether to rebuke the offender or to encourage the accuser to drop the matter and be reconciled with the other party.

*Fourth*, the "one or two others" help to protect the integrity of the process. Their presence will add another set of eyes and ears to all that is happening, and this will help ensure that all follows a course that is both godly and consistent with the biblical priorities outlined in this policy.

If it is clear that the offender has sinned against the accuser, then the goal is for the offender to repent of their sin and walk in the light. If there is not an appropriate response then the process proceeds to the next step.

## **STEP THREE: TELL IT TO THE CHURCH**

After an offender has "refused to listen to" the "one or two others," the next step is to "tell it to the church" (Matt. 18:17). This step has a fair amount of complexity to it because Jesus does not distinguish between the elders and the entire church. The obvious reason for this is that the church as an institution did not exist at this time. As an *ekklesia* (congregation of "called out"

ones") it certainly did, but not as an organization overseen by elders. Thus, we need to approach this step with care and wisdom.

What we see in this "tell it to the church" step are actually three separate actions:

- 1) ACTION 1: The elders become directly and formally involved;
- 2) ACTION 2: A hearing is held so that a formal judgment can be made;
- 3) ACTION 3: The congregation is informed and solicited to join in the increasing appeals to the offender.

Thinking of "tell it to the church" in this way helps to:

- 1) protect the dignity of the offender, for it allows for some investigation and appeal to happen without the entire church knowing the details;
- 2) capture the progressive nature of the discipline described in Matthew 18:15-20.

Since one of the goals of church discipline is the repentance of the offender, this helps to create an environment that can facilitate that. Justice that is too swift can make it virtually impossible for the offender to have opportunity to repent. Of course, there is a tension here, for justice that is too slow is often injustice and a failure to act appropriately in the face of clear sin. The balance can be difficult to strike in our day of internet outrage, but it is a balance we must seek in order to glorify God.

#### *ACTION 1: TELL IT TO THE CHURCH ELDERS*

Here we are concerned with the first, formal involvement of the elders. Their role at this time is to gather information, to begin to assess and to make appropriate appeals. If the sinner repents, then the process stops here. But if, as before, these appeals are not heard and the offender remains unrepentant, then the process must further proceed to a formal hearing (see below).

#### *ACTION 2: THE HEARING*

The point of a hearing is to establish the sin(s) committed, to let the offender defend himself, and to make another more formal appeal to the offender. All hearings of this kind must proceed according to the *Rules of Procedure for Adjudications for the Sovereign Grace Churches*. All parties in adjudications will be given the accompanying *Rules for Parties in an Adjudication* that provides the critical information from the *Rules of Procedure* that applies to them.<sup>14</sup>

A general description of the hearing is that three elders (likely from Crossway Church but perhaps from the Northeast Regional Assembly of Elders) will serve as the Panel to hear the case. It will proceed according to typical hearing formats with an opening by the Moderator of

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<sup>14</sup> Both documents are available at <http://sovereigngrace.com/polity> and can be ordered at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

the Panel, a clear statement of the issues to be decided, opening statements by the plaintiff and defendant, the presentation of evidence (documents and personal testimony), and closing statements by the Moderator, plaintiff, and defendant.

Plaintiffs and defendants may have advisors to help them with the hearing (as stipulated in the *Rules of Procedure*), and there are clear guidelines for how evidence is to be presented and how communication is to occur throughout the process.

Within ten days the Panel shall render their judgment in the hearing (also according to the *Rules of Procedure*). This judgment may have certain consequences attached to it, and this judgment may be appealed to the Regional Assembly of Elders (through the Regional Judicial Review Committee). The elders of Crossway Church can provide contact and process information for such appeals.<sup>15</sup>

If the result of the hearing is a determination that: 1) the sins were in fact committed, 2) that they are in fact worthy of excommunication, and 3) that the offender remains unrepentant, then the process proceeds to action 3.

#### *ACTION 3: TELL IT TO THE CHURCH CONGREGATION*

With this step we more literally "tell it to the church," meaning the congregation. This could mean the entire congregation or it could mean only a part. Wisdom will dictate which is the more appropriate in a given situation, but we expect that most situations will involve the entire congregation. The church may be told in a letter or a family meeting or through some other means. Enough information will be revealed so that the church members can make a meaningful appeal to the offender. This is the farthest thing from gossip where the goal is either entertainment at someone else's expense or simply to hurt the reputation of another. Rather, the goal of informing the church about the offender and his sin is to rescue the sinner from the self-destructiveness of his sin and the damage it is causing to others (as well as the other goals mentioned above).

If the sinner refuses to respond to the appeals of the congregation and remains unrepentant, then the process proceeds to the final step: excommunication.

#### **STEP FOUR: EXCOMMUNICATION**

To excommunicate someone from the church is to treat them "as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matt. 18:17). Here is another place where we need extra space to develop what we mean and do not mean. Here are seven key points about excommunication:

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<sup>15</sup> Interested parties can refer to the aforementioned *Book of Church Order* and *Rules of Procedure* for information on appeals.

1) In excommunication the church and the elders here are not making a definitive statement that the offender is absolutely *not* a Christian. Rather, we are only saying that the behavior of the person is so contrary to that of a Christian that it is inappropriate to treat them as one. In this sense, it is more of a statement about their behavior than their salvation. Jesus said to treat them *as if* (Greek *hōsper*, “just as”) they were “a Gentile and a tax collector,” not to treat them this way *because they are* “a Gentile and a tax collector.” That difference is important.

2) To treat a person “as a Gentile and a tax collector” means withholding the privileges of Crossway Church that are reserved for Christians and/or members:

- They will be forbidden from taking the Lord's Supper (an action reserved for believers).
- They will be removed from membership.
- They will be unable to participate in a Caregroup.
- They will be unable to serve on a ministry team.

Their behavior so calls into question their faith in Christ that we assume they do not believe in Jesus. Therefore, we will appeal to them to repent and turn to Christ. This might feel illogical or even unloving, but that has more to do with our sentimentality than biblical Christianity. Christian love “rejoices with the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6), even if it offends those we formerly called our brother or sister in Christ.

3) To treat a person “as a Gentile and a tax collector” also has implications for us as individual members of Crossway Church. Paul commanded the Corinthians not even “to associate<sup>16</sup> with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty” in the ways described in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. This is a more than a statement of withholding *membership* privileges to such a one. It is a statement of forbidding any kind of Christian fellowship. We see this same idea in places like 1 Timothy 1:20, “Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” Also, 2 John 1:7-10 and Romans 16:

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

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<sup>16</sup> From the Greek *sunanoamignumi*, “to associate with one another, normally involving spatial proximity and/or joint activity, and usually implying some kind of reciprocal relation or involvement” (Louw-Nida). C.K. Barrett seems to argue that the term means physical and complete removal: “be separated from the church body” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1968, 131-132). Thiselton defines the verb “do not associate with” as “do not mix indiscriminately with,” but over the course of his argument he seems to envision disassociating with the offender in all religious and social settings, though basic politeness that we extend to all on the streets and in the marketplaces, etc., we would still extend to this person. The point is not treating them as we would a fellow-believer in any setting (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC, 2000, 408-418). Gordon Fee writes that the man is to be “excluded from the community as it gathers for worship and instruction,” but he is unsure about whether this extends to individual social settings (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 1987, 226). John Calvin says on 1 Cor. 5:11 that “what Paul means is, that, in so far as it is in our power, we are to shun the society of those whom the Church has cut off from her communion” (*Commentary on 1 Corinthians*).

*Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, (2 John 1:7-10)*

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. (Rom. 16:17-18)*

This is not avoidance or shunning, but an engagement that makes clear that the excommunicant needs to repent if they wish to be restored to Christian fellowship.

4) This means that for the Christian, there are three categories of people, not two. First, there are believers that we regard as brothers and sisters in Christ even if they are not members of our church. Second, there are unbelievers that we evangelize as much as we are able. And third, there are *so-called Christians* who may profess faith in Christ while living in violation of serious and clear commandments in the Bible. In order to protect the church and the name of Christ, we must not extend to them our Christian fellowship and allow them to participate in the life of our church. We might relate to them publicly, but it is always with the intent of evangelizing them and urging them to repent of their sin.

5) It must be clear that we are talking about serious and clear violations of the word of God. We are not looking at the idols of a person's heart or the motivations of a person's heart or tendencies toward pride that we all possess. We are looking at behaviors that are *serious breaches of biblical living and clearly observable to others*.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Here are four approaches to church discipline from different sources:

(1) Note the following statement from the Presbyterian Church of America Book of Church Order (obtained March 4, 2014 at <http://www.pcaac.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2013-BCO-Reprint-ALL-with-links-for-Web-site-12-20-2013-asn.pdf>):

Excommunication is to be administered according to one or other of the two modes laid down for indefinite suspension, or to be inflicted in public as the court may decide. In administering this censure the moderator of the Session shall make a statement of the several steps which have been taken with respect to the offending brother, and of the decision to cut him off from the communion of the church. He shall then show from Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 the authority of the church to cast out unworthy members, and shall explain the nature, use and consequences of this censure. He shall then administer the censure in the words following:

Whereas, \_\_\_\_\_, a member of this church has been by sufficient proof convicted of the sin of \_\_\_\_\_, and after much admonition and prayer, obstinately refuses to hear the Church, and has manifested no evidence of repentance: Therefore, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we, the Session of \_\_\_\_\_ church do pronounce him to be excluded from the Sacraments, and

6) If a member is to be excommunicated, then the church will be informed either by written communication or at a members meeting. The communication will give enough detail to enable the church to properly call the offender to repentance. The communication will also make clear the restrictions placed upon the offender. That is, the elders will communicate what privileges and meetings will be forbidden to the offender. Last, the communication will convey the love we have for the offender and our desire to see him fully restored as a member of Crossway Church (or at least as a Christian in good standing).

7) Excommunication exists as long as the person remains unrepentant, but as soon as the person repents appropriately that excommunication can be lifted (see below). Such restoration is always the goal with church discipline, because the point of discipline is not to punish but to redeem.

### **THE NON-PARTICIPATION OF THE OFFENDER**

If a church member stops participating in the church discipline process or attempts to resign their

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cut off from the fellowship of the Church.

Prayer shall then be made that by God's blessing this solemn action of the court may issue in the repentance and restoration of the offender, and in the establishment of all true believers (36-6, emphasis mine).

The PCA statement seems to imply that a member who is excommunicated will not participate in the life of the church in any formal or informal way.

(2) 9 Marks argues that excommunication means to treat someone like an unbeliever, but does not go so far as to exclude them from the fellowship of the church as 1 Corinthians 5 seems to argue (<http://www.9marks.org/journal/church-discipline-primer#print-preview>). Jonathan Leeman of 9 Marks says, "The general tenor of one's relationships with the discipline individual should markedly change. Interactions should not be characterized by casualness but by deliberate conversations about repentance. Certainly family members should continue to fulfill family obligations (see Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:1-2)" (*Church Discipline: How the Church Protects the Name of Jesus*, 76).

(3) Jay Adams (*Handbook of Church Discipline*, 1986, 82-86) has an odd section in his book where he states that we are to remove the privileges of membership from the excommunicated member, but we are not forbidding them from attending worship services. Yet, in his reasoning he connects Paul's statement, "Purge the evil person from among you" (1 Cor. 5:13) to the places of Deuteronomy where an Israelite was to be removed from the community and stoned to death (Deut. 13:5; 17:7, 12; 21:21; 22:21-24). In other words, the Old Testament reference would seem to point toward a physical removal from the community of faith, not merely removing the privileges of membership. Adams has no more argumentation in this section.

(4) Robert Cheong wrote *God Redeeming His Bride: A Handbook for Church Discipline* (Christian Focus, 2012) for Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, KY. He defends the position that excommunication means removing a person from the community and mutual care of the church (cf. 139-155). This means that someone "removed from covenant community will no longer enjoy: (1) The relational support and accountability of friends from within the church; (2) The mutual benefit of serving others in the church; (3) The sense of community and identity associated with a group united in membership and purpose; (4) The mutually beneficial interactions in various contexts such as neighborhood functions, sporting events, workplace, and social gatherings; (5) The business arrangements that emerge from within the church circles. Members of the body of Christ will need to address such business-related agreements on a case-by-case basis and evaluate them using their Spirit-led consciences as a guide" (145). Even more explicitly he states that once someone is excluded "from community" they are also excluded "from church gatherings" (230).

membership during the process, the elders reserve the right to continue the discipline process in their absence. The demand for integrity, justice, and the protection of God's name and God's church require that we continue this process even if the offender fails to participate. At such times the elders will communicate with the church and with the offender as necessary, wise, and just.

### **THE RESTORATION OF THE OFFENDER**

If the offender repents after the above process has occurred and expresses a desire to be restored to full church membership, he is to inform the elders of his desire. Restoration of the offender will involve his complete repentance and a verbal acknowledgment (in appropriate detail) of his sinfulness. It will also involve a statement of his forgiveness of sins<sup>18</sup> by all appropriate parties and the elders themselves.<sup>19</sup> If there are practical steps of restitution that need to take place (alienated spouses moving back in together, financial damages to be paid, etc.), these should, if at all possible, occur before restoration can be completed.

Of course, there are times when it is not possible for restitution to be made or for reconciliation to take place or for forgiveness to be granted by the offended party. At such times the elders will apply biblical wisdom to decide if sufficient repentance has taken place by the offender.

If the elders determine that the offender is sincere and his repentance is credible, they will hold another hearing to restore him formally. The hearing will include the offender, the offended (as much as they are willing and able and it is seen as appropriate to the situation), and the elders of Crossway Church. The elders will begin the meeting with a statement of the purpose for the meeting and a prayer for God's grace to be upon it. Then they will hear from the offender as he details his repentance. The offended will be in attendance to verify that the repentance has occurred (if appropriate). One to two others can be present with the offended and with the offender as they desire. These others are not to participate in the formal proceedings. They are present to provide counsel and support. They also serve as witnesses to the proceedings.

If the elders feel that the repentance is genuine, they can decide immediately to restore the person to full membership. If they feel it necessary, they may also postpone that decision for a period of time. During this time (no more than 90 days), they can give a set of reasonable assignments for the offender to demonstrate true repentance. The elders may also decide that the repentance is not genuine and reject it. The person will continue in their current state of

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<sup>18</sup> Jay Adams, "Forgiveness is a promise in which one person goes on record as declaring he will never again bring up another's offense and hold it against him. The past as a debt is discharged; he is no longer held liable. His offense may be remembered only to help him to learn to act differently in the future. The offense will not be mentioned to him, or to others, and will not be the subject of brooding on the part of those who granted forgiveness" (*Handbook of Church Discipline*, 92-93).

<sup>19</sup> The elders in this case are not saying the offender is forgiven for his sin against the elders, but that he is forgiven by Christ for the sins he committed against the offended party.

excommunication.

If an offender is restored, the church and all relevant parties will be notified in the same manner as they were notified of the person's excommunication. If they were told at a members meeting, then another members meeting will be held to inform them of his restoration. If it was through a mailed letter, they will be informed by letter of his restoration. During this meeting or in the letter, the elders will describe the offender's repentance, their steps in restitution, the expression of forgiveness by those sinned against and the elders, and any practical guidance to the church in how to relate to the restored offender.

### **SPECIAL SITUATIONS REQUIRING AN ABBREVIATED PROCESS**

As we said above, there are times when a process does not involve all six of the steps of Matthew 18:15-20. Sometimes we will shorten this process along the lines of 1 Corinthians 5 and Titus 3:10-11. This can occur if the sin of the individual is so obvious, hurtful, and divisive that the protection of the welfare of the church or certain individuals requires it. This does not mean that due process has been abandoned, only that it must be significantly shortened because the evidence is clear and the actions of the defendant risk causing significant harm to the church or individuals. In all such matters, we are balancing the rights of the individual and the justice that is due to them with the obligation to protect the name of God and to defend his church.

### **APPEALING THE DECISION OF THE ELDERS**

Decisions in matters of church discipline can be appealed to the Regional Judicial Review Committee, as described in the *Book of Church Order of the Sovereign Grace Churches* (Section 23). The elders will assist the individual in getting this information if they are unable.

### **ALL DISCIPLINE HAS A REDEMPTIVE GOAL**

As we contemplate the process above and especially as we envision the possible excommunication of a member of the church, it is important to remember that all discipline has a redemptive goal. The desire throughout such a process—even one that ends in excommunication—is that the person will wake up to the seriousness of their sin, turn to the forgiveness offered them at the cross of Christ, and commit to walking out repentance as it relates to this sin. The intent is never to punish, never to alienate, never to seek revenge. The goal is the restoration of the offender, whether sooner or later. Excommunication is not an act of alienation, but an act of loving rebuke in order to communicate the seriousness of the sin in question and the critical need for the offender to repent.

## A Charge Against an Elder

One of the key texts with regard to bringing a charge against an elder is 1 Timothy 5:19-21:

*Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.*

This passage both provides a way to bring a charge against an elder to protect congregations against the sins of elders, and it protects elders against frivolous and sinfully motivated charges. When an elder is guilty of certain sins, it brings great harm on the church and the name of God. Therefore, in order to walk in integrity before God we must provide a clear way whereby church members can bring an accusation against an elder.

Section 24 in the Sovereign Grace *Book of Church Order* details the principles and practices for bringing charges against elders. The first step at Crossway Church is to bring it to the elder himself (if appropriate). Another approach is to bring it to one of the other elders since we have a plurality. If the charge has enough weight and seriousness to it, a trial will likely occur and the details for such a trial are contained in the BCO and in the *Rules of Procedure*.

Please know that our desire is to take seriously all legitimate charges against elders. There is great pressure on elders to be entreatable, humble, godly, just, and righteous in all such matters. If you ever feel that the elders of Crossway Church are failing to act in this way, you can appeal to the Regional Assembly of Elders, which includes elders from our sister churches in the Northeast area. You can appeal to the Regional Leader. His contact information is available via the Sovereign Grace website.<sup>20</sup> He will direct you in how best to pursue your issue.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sovereigngrace.com/regional-leaders>



## PART TWO

# OUR DENOMINATION



## Sovereign Grace Churches (Our Denomination)

What exactly is *Sovereign Grace Churches*? There are a lot of ways to answer this question, but our *Book of Church Order* (see chapter twelve) says the following:

*The Sovereign Grace Churches comprise an ecclesiastical body, significantly bound together in a common confession of faith, pursuing a common mission, guarding the corporate holiness of all the members, and governed by the assembly of the elders. (1.10)*

This means that though we are many churches, we are actually one "body" that is united on the basis of our doctrine and mission. This partnership gives tangible expression to the fact that all true churches are part of the one and only "body of Christ" with Christ as our head (Eph. 1:22-23).

Sovereign Grace can also be called a "family of churches," a phrase we use to capture our relational and organic connection. We are not a mere organization or association which is contractually united together.

A more common term for our union is simply a denomination. Though we are much smaller than denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention or the Presbyterian Church of America, we are a denomination because we are a distinctive group of churches that are united around certain key identifiers. Some of these are our seven shared values:

- 1) Reformed soteriology;
- 2) Gospel-centered expository preaching;
- 3) Continuationist pneumatology;
- 4) Complementarian leadership in the home and church;
- 5) Elder-governed and –led churches;
- 6) National and international outreach and church planting;
- 7) Interdependent churches united in fellowship, mission, and governance.

It is through our partnership with other Sovereign Grace Churches that we are working to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Further, we see this connection as a critical way that we will protect sound doctrine for future generations and see truly qualified men rise up as elders in our churches. It is a great privilege and joy to be a part of Sovereign Grace.

## The Book of Church Order of Sovereign Grace Churches

In April 2013, the churches of Sovereign Grace voted to adopt a Book of Church Order (1<sup>st</sup> edition) which reorganized our family of churches into a modified-presbyterian model of church government. It also articulated our view of elders, deacons, congregations, and church discipline. The churches established national and regional committees that would protect our doctrine, expand our mission, and increase our ability to care for one another as churches. The document is over one hundred pages in length, but here we want to give you some of the highlights of it.

Part One, *General Principles of the Sovereign Grace Churches*, explains some of the foundational theology that went into the BCO. It explains that Jesus Christ remains the head of the church and that all believers are part of his church. Individual churches are both to be autonomous in certain ways and interdependent in other ways. Further, Sovereign Grace is an ecclesiastical body and not a loose association of churches. The seven values of Sovereign Grace are also articulated here: (1) Reformed soteriology; (2) Gospel-centered expository preaching; (3) Continuationist pneumatology; (4) Complementarian leadership in the home and church; (5) Elder-governed and –led churches; (6) National and international outreach and church planting; (7) Interdependent churches united in fellowship, mission, and governance.

Part Two, *Local Church Polity*, defines the offices of elder and deacon in our churches, though it is the elder that gets the most thorough treatment. In these sections we look at the elder and issues related to his job description, qualifications, plurality, bi-vocational elders, ordination, and relationship with the congregation. Deacons are looked at as well—especially the areas on deacons where we must agree and where there is latitude.<sup>21</sup>

Part Three, *Extra-Local Polity*, is the most distinct to Sovereign Grace. Our family of churches are connected in two critical ways. First there is a Council of Elders, which, much like the US Senate, made up of one elder from each church (two in churches with more than 500 adult members). The Council of Elders is the highest authority in Sovereign Grace and votes on a variety of matters. A second critical connection for us is the Regional Assembly of Elders, which is composed of all the ordained elders within a given region (geographically-defined). It is at the regional level where much of the life of Sovereign Grace happens, for they handle judicial, church planting, and ordination matters. There are various committees at both the regional and national level that are explained in the BCO.

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<sup>21</sup> See our *Deacon Manual* for further information on Deacons in the life of Crossway Church.

Part Four, *Rules of Discipline*, articulates our theology and practice of church discipline in the local church, accusations against elders, and appeals to the regional and national appellate courts. Someone who has grave concerns about an elder and is considering making a charge against him should look here for guidance in how to do that.

As has been said on many occasions and in many ways, a Book of Church Order is no guarantee that we and our children will love God, sacrifice for the gospel, and preserve sound doctrine. Yet, it does provide a powerful means of grace in doing that. We are encouraged by the document and especially by the massive effort by dozens of people to produce it.

## Partnership Agreement of Sovereign Grace Churches<sup>22</sup>

Below we reprint the text of the partnership agreement that all Sovereign Grace Churches sign in order to join our ecclesiastical union. The elders of Crossway Church signed our agreement in May 2015.

### 19 Partnership Agreement – United States Churches<sup>23</sup>

#### 19.1 Preamble

The Sovereign Grace Churches together voluntarily form a unified ecclesiastical body (Sovereign Grace Churches) to glorify God as an expression of the bride of Christ. The churches share spiritual and material resources for the furtherance of our common mission, under a common government, which guards our fidelity to our common Statement of Faith and standards of corporate holiness. A local church (Church Partner) joins itself to the Sovereign Grace Churches when its elders, representing the Church Partner, enter into this Partnership Agreement with Sovereign Grace Churches, represented by its Executive Director, and its Regional Assembly of Elders, represented by the Regional Leader.

#### 19.2 The Partnership Commitments

##### 19.2.1 The Commitments of the Regional Assembly of Elders

The Regional Assembly of Elders recognizes that the terms and conditions of this Partnership Agreement are an integral part of The Book of Church Order of the Sovereign Grace Churches (BCO), and promises to uphold its commitments in the BCO among which are 1) to responsibly steward its role in the examination and approval of elder candidates for ordination in the Church Partner, 2) to pursue justice, righteousness, and holiness as it adjudicates conflicts involving the Church Partner, 3) to coordinate and support church planting and outreach within the Region, and 4) to care for

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<sup>22</sup> This section is duplicated from The Partnership Agreement as included in *The Book of Church Order of the Sovereign Grace Churches (5th edition)*, section 19. We have kept the numbering scheme the same as in the BCO to avoid potential confusion.

<sup>23</sup> *From the editors of the SG BCO:* The reason the current agreement is called *Partnership Agreement - United States Churches* is because the commitments speak most directly to churches in that setting. Our global churches outside of the United States will adapt this Partnership Agreement as best fits their abilities in their context. They will do this in cooperation with a Regional Leader and the Leadership Team.

the Church Partner and her elders in time of need.

### 19.2.2 The Commitments of Sovereign Grace Churches

Sovereign Grace Churches, on behalf of the Sovereign Grace Churches Council of Elders (Council of Elders) recognizes that the terms and conditions of this Partnership Agreement are an integral part of the BCO and promises to uphold its commitments in the BCO among which are 1) to steward the Statement of Faith by pursuing sound, biblical doctrine that includes Reformed Soteriology and Continuationist Pneumatology, 2) to maintain the BCO and to ensure its consistent implementation throughout all Regions, 3) to provide theological education via the Pastors College and training opportunities to the elders of every Church Partner, 4) to coordinate all Regions in the planting of churches globally as God would grant the resources to do so, and 5) to vigorously maintain and promote all of the unique values of Sovereign Grace Churches including elder governed/led polity, complementarian roles in the home and church, and gospel-centered doctrine and preaching.

### 19.2.3 The Commitments of the Church Partner

The Church Partner recognizes that the terms and conditions of this Partnership Agreement are an integral part of the BCO, and promises to uphold its commitments contained in the BCO among which are 1) to subscribe to the Statement of Faith (as articulated in Sections 9 and 13), 2) to submit to the BCO as articulated in Sections 9 and 13, 3) to actively participate in the Regional Assembly of Elders and Council of Elders, and 4) to actively support the mission and values of Sovereign Grace Churches in spirit, through participation, and by giving financially.

## **19.3 Terms and Conditions of Partnership**

### 19.3.1 Declarations of Intentions

19.3.1.1 This Agreement does not constitute a formation of a corporation (whether for profit or not-for-profit), a limited liability company, a legal partnership, a joint venture, or any other type of legal entity, an employment-employee relationship, or an independent contractor/consultant relationship.

19.3.1.2 Each Party's execution of this Agreement does not confer to any other party hereto the legal right to or any interest in such executing party's real property, personal property, intellectual property, employees, or responsibility or liability for such party's debts, claims, or liabilities.

19.3.1.3 Entering into this Agreement is entirely voluntary, which means that nothing herein is intended to prevent any Church Partner from leaving, as described in the BCO.

19.3.1.4 Notwithstanding this Agreement, the Church Partner shall continue to be solely responsible to fulfill its corporate purposes, as currently described by its governing documents, and to operate in a manner consistent with its status as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

19.3.1.5 This Agreement recognizes the independence of the Church of Jesus Christ from the control of the government as provided in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States because it reflects the Church Partner's sincerely-held beliefs and practices contained in the Bible and in the BCO with respect to a regional collaboration with other local churches united in the mission of Sovereign Grace.

19.3.1.6 For Church Partners outside the United States who, for legal and/or cultural reasons, are not able to sign this partnership agreement, the Leadership Team will propose a modified partnership agreement to be included in Section 19 of the BCO in accordance with Section 15.3.3 (approval of changes to the BCO).

## 19.3.2 Partnership Giving Plan

19.3.2.1 To fund this partnership in church planting, church development, and global mission efforts, each Church Partner commits to a goal of giving 10% of their annual general (non-designated) fund giving. Unless or until the Council of Elders modifies these distribution percentages, the annual giving will be allocated as follows: the first 5% will support our central functions, and the second 5% will support the region of the member church.

19.3.2.2 The Church Partner agrees to share fairly and proportionally in the expenses of any Regional Assembly of Elders events and activities in

which its elders participate, or to make other arrangements in collaboration with, and with the consent of, the other Church Partners.

### 19.3.3 Intellectual Property

19.3.3.1 The Church Partner agrees to respect copyright ownership of all materials owned and/or licensed by Sovereign Grace Churches and to abide by its policies and procedures for using such materials.

19.3.3.2 The Church Partner acknowledges that the Sovereign Grace® name and logo are trademarks owned by Sovereign Grace Churches. Crossway Churches grants to each Church Partner a nonexclusive license to use the Sovereign Grace® name and logo to identify its affiliation with Crossway Churches.

### 19.3.4 Indemnification

19.3.4.1 Each Church Partner will be responsible for determining its own risk management strategy, including maintaining appropriate levels of insurance coverage, implementing a safe and prudent child protection policy, and other measures.

19.3.4.2 As independent and autonomously governed entities, each Church Partner acknowledges and understands it is solely responsible for all respective claims, loss, damage, liability, or expenses occasioned or claimed by reason of acts or neglects of its own employees, independent contractors, invitees, or guests.

## 19.4 Signature Document

19.4.1 The Executive Director, on behalf of Sovereign Grace Churches *I, the undersigned Executive Director of Sovereign Grace Churches, having prayerfully and soberly considered this Partnership Agreement, with God as witness, representing the Council of Elders, enter into it assuming all of the responsibilities and privileges described therein.*

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_, Executive Director, Sovereign Grace Churches

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

19.4.2 The Regional Leader, on behalf of the Regional Assembly of Elders

*I, the undersigned Regional Leader, having prayerfully and soberly considered this Partnership Agreement, with God as witness, representing all the elders in the Region enter into it assuming all of the responsibilities and privileges described herein.*

Sovereign Grace Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_, Regional Leader

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

19.4.3 The Local Elders, on behalf of the Church Partner

*We, the current undersigned elders, having prayerfully and soberly considered this Partnership Agreement, with God as witness, enter into it, on behalf of the Church Partner, assuming all of the responsibilities and privileges described herein.*

Church Name:

City/State:

Elders:

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_



PART THREE

OFFICIAL CHURCH  
DOCUMENTS



## CROSSWAY CHURCH OF LANCASTER

### BYLAWS

**Adopted 2 July 2015**

#### 1. GENERAL

##### 1.1. Incorporation of Local Church

Crossway Church of Lancaster (the “Church”) is an ecclesiastical body established by Jesus Christ in Pennsylvania to preach the gospel, make disciples among the nations, and establish a community of Christian believers and disciples of Jesus Christ who love and practically apply the truths of the gospel.

##### 1.2. Autonomy of Local Church and Collaboration with Other Churches

Crossway Church of Lancaster is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs and own its own property and other assets. Recognizing, however, the benefits of collaboration with other churches, Crossway Church of Lancaster participates in an association of churches called Sovereign Grace Churches, Inc., a Maryland nonstock corporation whose primary place of business is in Louisville, Kentucky, in accordance with *The Book of Church Order for the Sovereign Grace Churches* (hereafter called *The Book of Church Order*) and the *Sovereign Grace Partnership Agreement* (hereafter called the *Partnership Agreement*). As stipulated in said agreement, this association involves no legal transfer to, or sharing of properties with Sovereign Grace Churches, but is a collaboration that advances a shared mission and facilitates interdependent church fellowship.

###### 1.2.1. Voluntary Partnership

Crossway Church of Lancaster voluntarily partners with other local churches that are represented by the same Regional Assembly of Elders (the “Regional Assembly”), as further described in the *Partnership Agreement*. These Bylaws are subject to the authority and precedent of *The Book of Church Order*, and they shall consist of the standards of doctrine, governance, discipline, and worship employed by this and other partnering churches in the Regional Assembly. All references to *The Book of Church Order* herein shall be deemed to include any subsequent current amendments or restatements. Crossway Church's participation in the Regional Assembly of Elders as defined by *The Book of Church Order* (including its Regional Judicial Committee) and the Sovereign Grace Court of Appeal is strictly voluntary and does not confer or transfer any of the Corporation’s legal

rights, privileges, assets, and liabilities to any of these distinct ecclesiastical bodies or any of their related or affiliated entities.

### **1.2.2. Responsibilities of Partnership**

Responsibilities of and to Sovereign Grace Churches shall be such as are summarized in the Partnership Agreement signed by all Sovereign Grace churches as found in the *Crossway Church Policy Manual* and *The Book of Church Order*.

### **1.2.3. Withdrawal from Partnership**

Should the Board of Elders determine that the Church must withdraw from the Sovereign Grace Churches association, it shall do so in full compliance with guidelines stipulated in *The Book of Church Order*, as agreed upon by the Church's Board in accordance with the *Partnership Agreement*.

### **1.2.4. Replacement of Partnership**

Should the Board of Elders determine that the Church must withdraw from the Sovereign Grace Churches association, it shall seek to establish a new extra-local partnership as soon as is practicable. Though such relationships take time to establish, the importance of such partnership makes it a priority. Therefore, the Board of Elders shall at least commence a formal partnership process with a new association within two years of the dissolution of the association with the Sovereign Grace Churches.

## **2. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **2.1. Statements of Faith, Biblical Morality, and Godly Conduct**

#### **2.1.1. Statement of Faith**

The Statement of Faith affirms the Church's commitment to sound biblical doctrine and to the core beliefs to which it is committed. Christianity involves essential truths which are taught in Sacred Scripture, and are meant to embody our faith and guide our practice. These truths—which reveal the nature, character, work and promises of God in the gospel—form the foundation of our faith and the center of our fellowship.

The *Statement of Faith* of this Corporation is as follows:

##### **2.1.1.1. 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.<sup>24</sup>

#### 2.1.1.2. **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; coexistent, 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 and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the foundation of Christian faith and life.<sup>25</sup>

#### 2.1.1.3. **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 out 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 thwarted.

He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and in his unfathomable grace he 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.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Matt. 5:17, 18; John 10:34, 35; 1 Cor. 14:37; Ps. 1:2; 19:7-11; Acts 17:11; James 1:18-25; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Peter 3:14-17; Gal. 1:8, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15, 16; Daniel 4:34, 35; Isa. 44:6, 8; 45:5, 21; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; John 1:1, 14; Acts 5:3, 4; Titus 1:13; Heb. 1:8-12.

<sup>26</sup> Gen. 1:1-31; Ps. 104:1-35; Heb. 11:3; Isa. 40:26; Daniel 4:34, 35; Ps. 115:3; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 4:20, 21; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:17, 18; 10:23; 2 Cor. 1:20-22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:28; James 1:17; Gen. 2:8; 1 John 1:2, 3; John 17:3; Rev. 4:10,11; Isa. 43:7.

#### 2.1.1.4. **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 power of his word. 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.<sup>27</sup>

#### 2.1.1.5. **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 worshiped as God the third person of the Trinity.<sup>28</sup>

#### 2.1.1.6. **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

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<sup>27</sup> John 1:1, 2, 14-18; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:34, 35; Heb. 1:2, 3, 8-12; 4:15; 7:26; Col. 1:15-19; 2:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14; John 3:16; Isa. 53:3-6; Matt. 20:28; 1 Peter 4:18; Rom. 3:23-26; Heb. 7:26, 27; 10:5-12; Matt. 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-29; Acts 1:3, 8-11; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; Heb.2:14, 15; Rev. 1:17, 18; Rom. 5:6-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb.7:23-25; Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 1:15-20; Rev. 5:1-14; 1 Cor. 1:22; John 14:21, 23, 24.

<sup>28</sup> Gen. 1:2; Rom. 1:3; 8:2, 6; John 16:7-11; 1 Cor. 2:8-13; 12:3; Eph. 3:16-19; John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2; John 16:13-15; 14:17, 25, 26; Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 1:13, 14.

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.<sup>29</sup>

#### 2.1.1.7. **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.<sup>30</sup>

#### 2.1.1.8. **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.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6; James 3:9; Ps. 8:3-8; Gen. 2:8; 3:1-13; Rom. 5:12-14; Gen. 3:23, 24; Rom. 5:6-14; 1 Cor. 15:22; Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Isa. 53:6; John 3:3, 19, 20; 8:34; 2 Peter 2:12, 18, 19; 1 Cor. 2:14; Phil. 3:18, 19; Rom. 3:9-18; 8:7; Eph. 2:1-3, 12; 4:17-19; Isa. 64:6.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 2:10, 11; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 2:2; 15:1-4; Acts 8:32-35; John 20:30 cf. 17:2, 3; 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:16; Luke 24:45-47; Rom. 1:1-4; 3:21-26; 5:15-21; 6:1-4; Acts 1:6-11; 1 John 2:2; 3:9, 10; Phil. 2:5-11; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6, 10; Eph. 1:3-14.

<sup>31</sup> Eph. 1:3-6; Rom. 8:28-30; 9:10-24; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 16:31; 20:20, 21; 26:17, 18; Rom. 3:26-28; 4:4-8; 5:1; Eph. 2:8-10; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:6; James 2:14-26; Luke 9:23-29.

### 2.1.1.9. **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.<sup>32</sup>

### 2.1.1.10. **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.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.1.1.11. **Empowered by the Holy 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

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<sup>32</sup> Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 3:27, 28; Titus 3:4, 5; Gal. 3:10-14; John 3:13-18; Rom. 4:4; 5:10, 11, 18-21; 6:23; 8:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:20, 21; Phil. 3:8, 9; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:5-7; Gal. 4:4-7; Rom. 8:1-8, 14-17; 1 John 1:9; Heb. 9:14; 10:12-18; Col. 2:13, 14; John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5.

<sup>33</sup> Rom. 6:1-14; 8:1-16; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 Peter 1:2; Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:1, 2; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 5:1, 2, 18; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 3:18; 1 John 5:3; Phil. 2:14, 15; Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11, 12; Titus 2:1-14; Matt. 24:13; Heb. 2:1; 4:11; Rom. 5:3; James 1:12; 5:10, 11; Luke 8:15; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:10-15; Phil. 3:12-16; Matt. 12:33-37; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 4:12, 13; Acts 17:11; Ps. 1; 19; Col. 3:16; Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; Matt. 6:9-13; Acts 2:46, 47; Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16, 17; James 5:15, 16; Jude 1:1, 20-24; John 10:27-29; Jer. 32:38-41; 1 Peter 5:10, 11; Heb. 13:20, 21; Phil. 2:12, 13; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24.

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 believers should seek this filling as a regular and recognizable blessing for the Christian life.

The Holy Spirit also 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.<sup>34</sup>

#### 2.1.1.12. **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, and 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 Tim. 2:11). 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.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:1-14, 38, 39; 4:8, 29-31; 6:3; 9:17; 13:9; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; Eph. 5:18-20; 1 Thess. 5:19-21; Gal. 3:4; Eph. 4:3-13; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Matt. 16:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:40-47; 13:1-3; 14:27; 15:41; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:8-13; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:5; Heb. 3:12, 13; 10:23-25; 1 Cor. 14:31-35; 1 Tim. 2:8; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-5; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; 1 Peter 4:10, 11; Rom. 12:3-13.

#### 2.1.1.13. **Water Baptism**

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.<sup>36</sup>

#### 2.1.1.14. **The Lord's Supper**

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.<sup>37</sup>

#### 2.1.1.15. **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 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.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:35-38; 9:16-18; 10:44-48; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-4.

<sup>37</sup> Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:17-34.

<sup>38</sup> Matt. 24:29-31; John 5:28, 29; 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Rom. 8:18-25; 13:11, 12; 1 Cor. 15:20-58; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:10; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11; 2 Thess. 1:5-12; 5:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:3-9; 2 Peter 3:8-13; 1 John 3:2, 3; Jude 1:24, 25; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 1:7; 5:9, 10; 20-22.

## 2.1.2. Statement of Biblical Morality

The *Statement of Biblical Morality* is an affirmative expression of this Church's core biblical beliefs and values as well as its response to the changing legal and moral context in which it exists. It is a conscious application of the divine imperative that the Church "*not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our mind*" (Romans 12:1, 2). In an age in which specific biblical practices are being increasingly threatened by a rapidly deteriorating moral climate and assailed by an aggressively secular agenda, it is essential that the Church respond with clear conviction and steady voice. The Bible stands as our guide for faith and practice, not the changing values of the culture. To that end we affirm the following.

### 2.1.2.1. Church Discipline

The Scriptures call every Christian to a life of holiness, forbidding believers from habitual conformity to the sinful desires of the flesh or the ungodly patterns and behaviors of the world. Since sin clings so easily to the believer, Jesus, as Lord of the Church, has established means of accountability (commonly known as *church discipline*) within the local church, to guard the Christian from falling into impenitent habitual sins. Such church discipline, which ranges from private admonition to public rebuke and/or removal from membership in the Church, is to be motivated by a shared desire for holy lives, a loving desire to lead others to repentance and restoration, and a zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ, our Lord.<sup>39</sup>

For the Church to remain under God's blessing and fulfill God's intentions, at times it may become necessary, formally and corporately, to confront sin or false doctrine in a Church member, including one who is serving as a Church elder.<sup>40</sup> The Church shall follow the rules prescribed in *The Book of Church Order* for the adjudication of matters giving rise to possible church discipline and the administration of church discipline involving Church members, and the adjudication of charges against and the possible discipline of Church elders. The Church shall submit to the decisions of each ecclesiastical body that *The Book of Church Order* prescribes as having jurisdiction over the disciplinary matter at each stage of its adjudication. Unless the Board determines that it otherwise serves the best interest of the Church, any individual serving as a director and/or officer of the Corporation who is the subject of any church disciplinary proceeding shall be required to take a leave of absence from active service. After the disciplinary process has concluded, the Board shall exercise discretion over whether it is appropriate for the individual to return to active service, to continue his leave of absence for a prescribed period of time, or to resign or be removed from his position.

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<sup>39</sup> 1 Peter 2:11, 12; 4:1-3; Rom. 12:1, 2; Heb.12:1; Matt. 18:15-19; Rom. 16:17, 18; Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 12:20-13:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:19-22; Titus 3:10, 11; James 5:19, 20; 2 John 1:8-11; Rev. 2:20.

<sup>40</sup> Scriptural instruction and precedent for this practice appear in Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1-2; Acts 20:28ff; Gal. 2:11-14; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 2:5-11.

### 2.1.2.2. **Sexuality and Marriage**

A Biblical view of manhood and womanhood and an appreciation for and commitment to marriage and the family are values rooted in the Sacred Scriptures. The holy institution of marriage is to be between one man and one woman for life, as established in God's creation of man and woman in His image and in the relationship between Christ and His Church.

While men and women are equal before God as sharers of his image in creation and partakers of his grace in Christ, we believe that specific gender roles in marriage are God's normative law for the family. We believe in the servant-leadership role of men in the home, and in the complementary function of women in contributing their abilities to supply the inadequacies and support the leadership of those men. We reject men's attitudes of abuse, neglect, and passivity, while simultaneously grieving women's attitudes of disrespect, liberation and superiority as being counter to Scripture, nature, and the well-being of all.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, sexual chastity before, and lifelong fidelity in a heterosexual marriage embody an abiding divine law which is to guide the faith and life of every Christian and the teachings of this church. Sexual chastity includes abstinence from pre-marital sex, pornography, adultery, and homosexuality; indeed any sexual activity outside of a one-man-and-one-woman covenanted marriage relationship. In light of current cultural erosion of sexual morality, it is essential that the church stand firm on the Bible's teachings about sexual identity and purity. Crossway Church and its elders may not endorse gender reassignment surgery, nor approve or officiate same sex marriages or unions.

While sexual sin is uniquely serious before God, no sexual sin is beyond God's power to redeem and restore. We affirm the love of God for all who are guilty of sexual sin in any of its forms, and offer the gospel and grace of God to all who will repent of such sins and turn in faith to Christ for their forgiveness and deliverance.<sup>42</sup>

### 2.1.2.3. **Divorce**

It is God's intention that the covenant of marriage be a joyful union that endures for life. Those whom God has joined together must cleave as one flesh in faithful love, and are not to be torn apart. Divorce is prohibited by God except when sexual infidelity and/or abandonment occur. While permissible in such cases, divorce is not required, and should be avoided whenever possible. In all cases of marital crisis repentance and reconciliation should be the first recourse, although all reasonable steps should be taken to protect spouses from physical and/or severe mental abuse.

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<sup>41</sup> For a fuller description of our views on manhood, womanhood and the family, see: The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, by The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, [www.cbmw.org](http://www.cbmw.org).

<sup>42</sup> Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 1 Cor. 11:2, 3; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18, 19; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:9-15; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:1-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-16; 14:34, 35; Mal. 2:14-16; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 5:1-13.

In addition, we believe that remarriage by those who are unbiblically divorced is strictly forbidden by Christ Jesus our Lord, and is not to be condoned by his church. The remarriage of divorced believers must be approved by the Church's Board of Elders if they determine that there is divorce for biblical cause as defined above and that reconciliation of the previous marriage has been pursued according to biblical priorities.<sup>43</sup>

#### **2.1.2.4. The Sanctity of Life**

The Scriptures teach that human life, which is made in the image of God, begins at conception. This infuses sanctity into all human life from conception to natural death, or death brought about justly at the hands of a civil magistrate for capital crimes. This sacredness must afford to the unborn and to the infirmed of any age all the rights and protections granted to all other human beings.

As a means of protecting the sanctity of innocent human life, Scripture allows for capital punishment (1) administered by the civil magistrate (2) through a just process under strict guidelines (3) for those found guilty of capital crimes. Consistent with the value of human life, which is made in God's image, all people, including those guilty of capital crimes, should be treated with dignity.<sup>44</sup>

#### **2.1.2.5. On Civil Government**

The Christian tradition has historically affirmed that though war is always tragic, there are occasions for just warfare, and Christians may participate honorably in the armed services in faith before God and for the good of their fellow citizens.

As citizens of two kingdoms (temporal and eternal), Christians are called to humble submission before duly constituted magistrates. Christians may also serve as such magistrates and as civil servants, including roles as senators, governors, police officers, etc. Moreover, given our historic freedoms as citizens of the United States of America, Christians should participate fully in the life of our nation by voting, paying taxes, and otherwise seeking to love our neighbors.<sup>45</sup>

However, all earthly authority is contingent and derived from God, and in no way should be construed as to override God's full sovereignty and the responsibility of God's children to submit to him alone as Lord of all. Therefore, there may be times when Christians must, regrettably and in humility before God and man, refuse to submit to earthly authorities when their commands violate human dignity and/or call Christians to renounce their

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<sup>43</sup> Gen. 2:18-25; Prov. 5:15-20; Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 5:27-32; 19:1-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-16; Eph. 5:22-33.

<sup>44</sup> Ps. 139:13-16; 51:5; Luke 1:41-44; Gen. 1:27; 9:6; Prov. 24:11, 12; 31:8, 9; Ps. 72:1-4; James 1:27; Gen. 9:6; Deut. 17:6, 7; 19:15-20; Leviticus 19:15; Rom. 13:1-4; Gen. 1:27.

<sup>45</sup> Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Matt. 22:21; Eph. 5:22-6:9; Heb. 13:17.

allegiance to Jesus Christ.<sup>46</sup>

#### **2.1.2.6. Parental Discipline of Children**

Children are a gift from God to be cherished and enjoyed. It is every parent's duty to delight in his or her children and to create a home of tender affection and love. The Holy Scriptures further mandate that parents train up their children to become responsible, mature, relationally-skilled, and faith-embracing men and women. To this end the Bible commands parents to love, nourish, teach, train, and discipline their children.

While the Scriptures teach the corporeal discipline of children, such discipline must be applied with great caution and tender care. Remembering that every child is made in the image of God, he or she must always be treated with respect and dignity. This precludes every form of wrathful, harmful, or injurious physical discipline, and requires that parents be loving, humble, cautious, and measured in the exercise of any corporeal training.

The Church deplures child abuse in any and all its forms, and shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that its parents understand and practice parental discipline with all due regard for the safety and well-being of every child. To do harm to a child is to incur the special displeasure of God.<sup>47</sup>

### **2.2. Religious Practices of Corporation**

To be consistent with the Church's religious mission, the Corporation shall not:

2.2.1. Establish any public or private policies or positions that conflict with the Statement of Faith.

2.2.2. Elect or appoint or retain any Board member who has not subscribed to a maintained agreement with the Statement of Faith. Any elder who drifts from agreement with the Statement of Faith is bound to alert the board to his disagreement.

2.2.3. Hire or retain any employee whom the Board has determined has not subscribed to the Statement of Faith or acted in a manner consistent with the Statement of Faith or the religious mission of the Corporation unless, the Board determines that he or she has fully and properly repented of such action and that he or she may be restored to their previous position.

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<sup>46</sup> Exod. 1:8-22; Acts 5:27-41; 1 Pet. 2:11-25; 1 Pet. 3:13-17.

<sup>47</sup> Ps. 127:3-5; 1 Thess. 2:7, 8; Matt. 19:13, 14; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 78:2-10; Prov. 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15; Heb.12:11; Matt. 18:2-5.

### **3. OFFICES**

#### **3.1. Registered Office and Agent.**

The Corporation shall continuously maintain a registered office and registered agent within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

#### **3.2. Principal Office.**

The principal office of the Corporation shall be located in Lancaster Township, Lancaster County, PA, or such place as shall be determined by the Elder Board.

#### **3.3. Additional Offices.**

The Corporation may also have offices at such other places as the Elder Board may from time to time determine and the business of the Corporation may require.

### **4. ELDER BOARD**

#### **4.1. Elders as Directors**

All authority in the Church is derived from Jesus Christ and is exercised on His behalf. The primary governance structure in this local church is its eldership. The elders serve as the Corporation's Board of Directors, which shall exercise all such powers of the Corporation and do all such lawful acts and things that are not prohibited by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws. While ordination to eldership and appointment to the board are two separate appointments, all ordained elders of a particular local church are to be appointed to the board and therefore the terms elder and board member are interchangeable. *The Book of Church Order* addresses the number, term, qualifications, selection process, responsibilities, voting rights, removal, and resignation of elders, and is incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth in this Section 4 of these Bylaws. The Church shall be responsible for the ordination of its elders in accordance with the standards maintained by its Regional Assembly and subject to the accountability generally described in Section 7 of these Bylaws, and more specifically described in Section 3 of *The Book of Church Order*.

#### **4.2. Number**

The Elder Board shall consist of not less than three (3) persons, as may be determined from time to time by resolution of the Elder Board. If the Church has only one elder, the Corporation shall appoint as directors at least two other elders from one or more local churches represented in the same Regional Assembly in which the Church is a Partner. If the Church has only two elders, the Corporation shall appoint as director at least one other elder from a local church represented in the same Regional Assembly in which the Church is a Partner. Directors shall be appointed by the

Elder Board for terms as determined by the Board or until their successors are appointed and qualify in their stead.

#### **4.3. Appointment**

The initial Elder Board shall be as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. Subsequent appointments of directors of the Corporation may be made by a supermajority (two-thirds) vote of the directors at any regular meeting of the Elder Board, or at a special meeting convened for that purpose.

#### **4.4. Vacancy**

If the office of any director becomes vacant, the remaining directors, though less than a quorum, shall be authorized to select a successor who shall be appointed by the Elder Board of the Corporation to serve the unexpired term of the vacated directorship.

#### **4.5. Powers**

The government of the Church is vested in its elders, who shall provide oversight in the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, and shall appoint and confer authority upon an Elder Board to manage the Corporation. The Elder Board shall exercise all such powers of the Corporation and do all such lawful acts and things that are not prohibited by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws.

#### **4.6. Committees**

Committees of the Board may be appointed by resolution passed by a majority of the whole Board, or by delegation of the Senior Pastor when he is authorized by the Board so to do. Committees shall be composed of two or more members of the Board and shall have such powers of the Board as may be expressly delegated to it by resolution of the Board of Elders, except with respect to:

4.6.1. The creation or filling of vacancies in the Elder Board.

4.6.2. The adoption, amendment or repeal of the Bylaws.

4.6.3. The amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board that by its terms is amendable or repealable only by the Board.

4.6.4. Action on matters committed by the Bylaws or a resolution of the Board of Elders exclusively to another committee of the Board.

4.6.5. The Board may designate one or more elder(s) as alternate members of any committee, who may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the

committee. In the absence or disqualification of a member of a committee, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not he or they constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another elder to act at the meeting in the place of any absent or disqualified member.

4.6.6. Each committee of the Board shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. The delegation of authority to any committee shall not operate to relieve the Board of Elders or any member of the Board from any responsibility imposed by law or Scripture. Rules governing procedures for meetings of any committee of the Board shall be established by the Board of Elders, or in the absence thereof, by the committee itself. All actions by any Board Committee shall be reported to the Board of Elders at the meeting next succeeding such action. The general functions of councils and committees are:

4.6.6.1. To bring considered recommendations to the Board concerning ministries.

4.6.6.2. To provide a wider base of counsel to the elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

4.6.6.3. To complete such duties and exercise such powers as are delegated to them by the Board.

4.6.6.4. All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Board

#### **4.7. Removal and Resignation**

Any director who resigns or is removed as an elder in the Church (or another local church associated with Sovereign Grace Churches, if the Church has only one or two elders) shall automatically be removed as a director of the Corporation. A director otherwise may deliver a written notice of intent to resign to the Board chair, which shall be effective upon its acceptance by the Board. Any director may be removed from the Board with or without cause when, in the sole judgment and discretion of the Elder Board, it is determined by at least a two-thirds percent majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present that such director should no longer serve on the Board; provided, however, that a notice, including the names of the director(s) proposed to be removed, and the date, time and place of any meeting called to consider such removal shall be given in writing to each of the directors at least seven (7) days prior to the date of such meeting.

4.7.1. Any elder may be removed from the board/eldership at any regular or special meeting of the Board if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated, or in the case of being found spiritually unqualified according to the procedural steps outlined in *The Book of Church Order* and the relevant policies of this Church (according to the Scriptures, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 as well as other texts describing mature

Christian character; e.g.-Galatians 5:18-24; 1 Corinthians 13), after thorough corroborating investigation by the elders (or a duly appointed Committee of the Board, per Article VII, Section 18 of these Bylaws, at the sole discretion of the Board).

4.7.2. Should an elder confess to serious sin, and agrees to resign from his position, the regional Judicial Review Committee should be contacted to appoint a moderator of just cause to review the resignation agreement to confirm a trial is not necessary. Should the moderator determine the process and agreement are fair and freely agreed upon, the eldership will follow the same guidelines as outlined in 24.8.5 of *The Book of Church Order* for removal from office.

4.7.3. Removal of an elder from the board may also occur for non-disciplinary reasons. Evaluation regarding the performance of a man in his office or the elimination of a role at the discretion of the Board may necessitate removal as well. In such instances great care should be exercised to decide such matters:

4.7.3.1. Only upon careful review and discussion.

4.7.3.2. By a supermajority (two-thirds) vote of the Board.

4.7.3.3. With due consideration of the man's needs, family, and calling, as well as the church's needs. Pastoral care should be given to clarify to the congregation the reasons for the decision, so as to avoid any appearance of discipline that might reflect negatively upon the man or his reputation.

4.7.3.4. Removal of a man for non-disciplinary reasons does not revoke his ordination.

4.7.4. Whenever a man is removed from office for any reason, such actions should be taken with all care and gentleness, giving due regard to family, financial, and other considerations. In such cases the man removed shall be informed of the possibilities of future restoration; and if such restoration is deemed possible, the process involved.

The elders reserve the right to dismiss the Senior Pastor in accordance with *The Book of Church Order*. The Senior Pastor must give sixty (60) days' notice if he intends to resign.

#### **4.8. Accusations against an Elder**

Full adjudication of the matter shall be completed in accord with procedures more fully outlined in Scripture, the Church's *Policy Manual*, and in *The Book of Church Order* (cf. esp. Section 24).

#### **4.9. Transactions with Interested Parties**

A contract or other transaction between the Corporation and one or more of its directors, officers, or family members thereof (hereinafter "Interested Party"), or between the Corporation and any other entity of which entity one or more directors, officers, elders, or trustees are also Interested Parties, or in which entity an Interested Party has a material financial interest, shall be voidable at the sole election of the Corporation unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:

4.9.1. The transaction was fair and reasonable as to the Corporation, or was reasonably determined to be in furtherance of its exempt purposes at the time the Corporation entered into the transaction.

4.9.2. Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the Elder Board authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the directors then in office, without counting the vote of the interested director or directors, and with full knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the Interested Parties' interest in the transaction, even though the disinterested directors are less than a quorum.

4.9.3. The Corporation entered into the transaction solely to advance its corporate purposes and not for the personal benefit of any other party or other entity. Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the disinterested members of the Elder Board, in good faith and with ordinary care, determined, after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the Corporation could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the Corporation's tax-exempt purposes.

Common or interested directors may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Elder Board (or a committee thereof) which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction.

Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the Corporation to any of its directors or officers, as provided further in Section 10.6 of these Bylaws.

#### **4.10. Conflicts of Interest Policy**

It is the policy of the Corporation to avoid conflicts of interest and to provide for full disclosure of any and all material conflicting interests by Board members, officers, senior management, and employees. The Board should be equipped to gather all relevant facts and circumstances to determine in accordance with the guidelines of Section 4.9 above, whether or not any disclosed potential conflict is benign and not in any way jeopardizing the religious mission, exempt function, or reputation of Christ's church, so that the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the Corporation. This policy will be implemented by appropriate practices and / or written procedures adopted by the Elder Board.

#### **4.11. Fees and Compensation**

Elders (as such) shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their Board services. However, nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any elders from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from Crossway Church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

Elders of the Church shall receive remuneration for their labors in accordance with policies for compensation as prescribed in the church's Policy Manual. Fixed salaries may be determined through:

4.11.1. The extent and nature of the elder's work.

4.11.2. Any salary recommendations of our Sovereign Grace Churches denomination.

4.11.3. The recommendations of a Finance Committee appointed by the Board of Elders, which committee shall consist of no less than three 3 persons; elder approval by a supermajority (two-thirds) of the recommended salary bands; and a super-majority (two-thirds) approval by the Board of the Finance Committee's recommendations, with no elder permitted to vote on the nature and amount of his own compensation.

#### **4.12. Royalties and Honoraria**

Elders of the church shall establish a royalties and honoraria policy to be reflected in the Church *Policy Manual*.

#### **4.13. Resignation, Termination, and Severance of Elders Employed by Church**

The *Policy Manual* shall provide the Church's guidelines regarding the resignation, termination, and severance of elders who are employed by the Church.

### **5. MEETINGS OF THE ELDER BOARD**

#### **5.1. Notice**

Regular, annual, and special meetings of the Elder Board may be held within or outside the Pennsylvania without formal notice at such time and place as shall from time to time be determined by the Board, except for meetings at which the Board shall consider the removal of a director, as noted in Section 4.7.

**5.2. Waiver of Notice**

Whenever any notice is required to be given by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to the notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent thereto. Attendance at a meeting by a person entitled to notice shall constitute a waiver of proper notice of such meeting, except where attendance is for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

**5.3. Quorum**

A majority of the directors shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Elder Board, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws. In the case of an equality of votes, the Senior Pastor shall have a second or deciding vote.

**5.4. Action Without a Meeting**

Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Elder Board or by a committee thereof may be taken without a meeting, by written action authorized<sup>48</sup> by all the directors. However, a written consent setting forth the action so taken and authorized and dated by all the members of the Board or of a committee, as the case may be, must be filed with the minutes of proceedings of the Board or the committee. The written action is effective when authorized and dated by the required number of directors, unless a different effective time is provided in the written action. When written action is permitted to be taken by less than all directors, all directors must be notified promptly of its text and effective date.<sup>49</sup> Failure to provide the notice does not invalidate the written action, but a director who does not sign and date the written action is not liable for the action.

**5.5. Participation by Alternate Means**

Members of the Elder Board or of any committee designated thereby may participate in a meeting of such Board or committee by means of communications equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting can effectively interact with one another, if each individual entitled to participate in the meeting consents to the meeting being held by means of that system. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. When such a meeting is conducted by means of a conference telephone or other means of remote communications, the minutes recording any action taken at such meeting shall also note who participated in person and who participated by alternative communications.

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## 6. OFFICERS

### 6.1. Number and Positions

The officers of the Corporation shall be elected by the Elder Board - the Senior Pastor (who functions as President), Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board may also elect a Vice-President, one or more assistant secretaries and assistant Treasurers.

Except as otherwise provided, the officers may, but need not be, Pastors of the Church. However, all officers must be members in good standing of the Church. The Board may appoint such other officers and agents as it shall deem necessary, who shall hold their offices for such terms and shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as shall be determined from time to time by the Board. In the event that the President is incapacitated, another regional elder could be appointed to serve in the transition, at the discretion of the Board.

### 6.2. Term of Office

The Elder Board shall elect officers of the Corporation, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. Any officer elected or appointed by the Elder Board may be removed at any time by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present, whenever, in their judgment, the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby. If the office of any officer becomes vacant for any reason, the vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the Elder Board. In case of the absence or disability of an officer of the Corporation, or in any other case that the Elder Board may deem sufficient reason therefore, a majority of the Board at a meeting duly called for that purpose and at which a quorum is present, may delegate for the time being any or all of the powers or duties of any officer to any other officer, Pastor, or any other person.

### 6.3. The Senior Pastor

To be appointed as the Senior Pastor, and to maintain that position, an individual must satisfy the criteria established for pastors, as set forth in Section 3 of *The Book of Church Order*. In the exercise of pastoral plurality within the Church there shall be a first among equals; one man among the many whose gifted influence exercises a greater leadership role than that of the others.

He shall be called the Senior Pastor, and shall be responsible to lead the pastoral team in ministering the Word of God to the people of God. He shall be an equal among his fellow elders in the exercise of authority, but shall have a distinct role in that he serves as the leader of his fellow elders.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See *The Book of Church Order*, Section 7, for more on the role of Senior Pastor.

**6.3.1. Corporate service** - He shall serve as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, and he shall have stewardship responsibility for advancing the vision and mission of the Corporation and managing or overseeing the business of the Corporation consistent with the authority delegated and the resolutions promulgated by the Board.

6.3.1.1. He shall see that orders and resolutions of the Board are carried into effect, sign and deliver in the name of the Corporation deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments pertaining to the business of the Corporation, except in cases in which the authority to sign and deliver is required by law to be exercised by another person or is expressly delegated by the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws or by the Board to another officer or agent of the Corporation.

6.3.1.2. He shall make reports to the Elder Board, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Elder Board from time to time.

6.3.1.3. This corporate role of the Senior Pastor shall always be secondary and subservient to his primary role as the spiritual leader of the local church to establish the Church's vision, mission, and priorities in accordance with the Bible, to lead the local church to be a gospel-centered reflection of Christ's body, to extend the glory and kingdom of God in and through this local church.

### **6.3.2. Selection**

It is the responsibility of the eldership of the Church to identify and commission each of its members to fulfill tasks and responsibilities as they see fit, including the Senior Pastorate. However, because of the visibility that a Senior Pastor has, and because of the unique and important role in which he serves with respect to the congregation, the Church should choose a Senior Pastor carefully and with conscientious attention to the observations, concerns, and input of the flock.

6.3.2.1. The selection process should include steps analogous to those for the selection of other elders, only with more nuanced attention to the unique gifting and role for which this man is being considered. These should include:

6.3.2.1.1. Eldership analysis and definition of the proposed Senior Pastor role—as the needs and circumstances of the church presently define it—and of each elder's gifts relative to that analysis.

6.3.2.1.2. Eldership choice (by a super-majority (two-thirds) vote of all Board members) of the man they will set before the congregation for the input of the flock.

6.3.2.1.3. Eldership presentation of the candidate to the congregation for their questions, concerns, and commendations, giving a minimum of six

weeks for congregational input before the eldership's final decision on the matter.

6.3.2.1.4. Eldership final discussion and decision on the candidate, with a supermajority (two-thirds) vote deciding on the candidate.

6.3.2.1.5. Eldership public presentation and formal installation of the man into the office during a Sunday gathering.

### **6.3.3. Role of the Senior Pastor**

The role of the Senior Pastor is outlined in *The Book of Church Order*, section 6. The precise nature of the role of the Senior Pastor in the Church may vary depending on the maturity of an eldership, the range of gifts on the team, the level of specialization on the team, and various other factors. Each local eldership should adjust the role of the Senior Pastor to match his local job description. Generally, the Senior Pastor of the Church shall be expected to:

- Provide doctrinal leadership through a prominent teaching role
- Develop the eldership into a cohesive leadership team
- Provide pastoral care for the eldership
- Facilitate decision-making by serving as Chairman of the Board of local elders, or by ensuring that another elder is so tasked
- Identify and deploy spiritual gifts among the elders in consultation with the other elders
- Encourage efficiency
- Coordinate eldership training
- Act as the normal spokesman for the elders

### **6.3.4. Accusation and Dismissal**

Charges made against the Senior Pastor shall be adjudicated in compliance with guidelines established by *The Book of Church Order*.

### **6.3.5. Duration of the Senior Pastor's Role**

The Senior Pastor shall continue in his role until such a time either that he is disqualified from the role or is better suited for another role, or that another man is more strategically gifted for the role according to the careful and deliberate decision of the eldership. Periodic review of the Senior Pastor's role, gifting, labors, and character shall be made in accord with the standard review policies of the church.

#### **6.4. Vice President**

A Vice President is not required, but he should be an elder if one is appointed.

#### **6.5. The Secretary**

6.5.1. The Secretary or an assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board and record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose.

6.5.2. He shall bear responsibility for maintaining records of and, when necessary, certifying proceedings of the Board.

6.5.3. He shall perform like duties for the standing committees when required.

6.5.4. The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, such notice as is required of all meetings of the Elder Board.

6.5.5. He shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Elder Board from time to time.

6.5.6. The Secretary shall keep in safe custody the seal of the Corporation and, when authorized by the Board, affix the same to any instrument requiring it, and when so affixed it shall be attested by the signature of the Secretary, or by the signature of the Treasurer or an assistant Secretary.

#### **6.6. Assistant Secretaries**

The assistant Secretaries in the order of their seniority shall, in the absence or disability of the Secretary, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Secretary, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Elder Board from time to time.

#### **6.7. The Treasurer**

6.7.1. Except as the Elder Board may otherwise determine, the Treasurer shall deliver all funds and securities of the Corporation which may come into his hands to such bank or trust company as the directors shall designate as a depository, and shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Corporation.

6.7.2. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Board, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements.

6.7.3. He shall render to the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board, at the regular meetings of the Board or whenever they may require it, an account of all his transactions as Treasurer

and of the financial condition of the Corporation.

6.7.4. He shall deposit money, drafts, and checks in the name of and to the credit of the Corporation in the banks and depositories designated by the Board.

6.7.5. He shall endorse for deposit notes, checks, and drafts received by the Corporation as ordered by the Board, making proper vouchers for the deposit.

6.7.6. He shall, upon request, provide the Senior Pastor and the Board an account of the financial condition of the Corporation.

6.7.7. If required by the Elder Board, the Treasurer shall give the Corporation a bond in such sum and with such surety or sureties as shall be satisfactory to the Board for the faithful performance of the duties of his office, and for the restoration to the Corporation, in case of death, resignation, retirement or removal from office, of all books, papers, vouchers, money, and other property of whatever kind in possession or under the control of the Treasurer, belonging to the Corporation.

6.7.8. The Treasurer shall also have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Elder Board from time to time.

6.7.9. The Treasurer may delegate his responsibilities to other qualified members but retains overall responsibility for the discharge of the duties of his office.

## **6.8. Assistant Treasurers**

The assistant Treasurers in the order of their seniority shall, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Treasurer, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Elder Board from time to time.

## **7. ORDINATION, LICENSING, COMMISSIONING**

### **7.1. Ordination of Elders**

Ordination of an Elder refers to the recognition by the Board of Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve. Such ordination shall be conferred in accordance with procedures delineated in Article VI, Section 3 of these Bylaws, in the Church's *Policy Manual*, and in compliance with *The Book of Church Order*. Ordination of an Elder within Sovereign Grace Churches shall be conferred for life, and is transferable within his region, as stated in *The Book of Church Order*, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

## 7.2. Appeals of Decisions

As noted in *The Book of Church Order*, the Church's decisions on the disqualification or discipline of elders and Church members may be appealed to the Regional Judicial Committee, and decisions of the Regional Judicial Committee may be appealed to the Court of Appeals. The Corporation shall accept and/or recognize the decisions of the Regional Judicial Committee and the Court of Appeals according to the stipulations and qualifications of *The Book of Church Order* and the *Partnership Agreement*, to the extent that they may affect matters of corporate governance (e.g., the fitness of an individual to serve as a director based on his qualification or disqualification as an elder).

## 7.3. Ordination of Deacons

The deacon is an office of the New Testament church and fulfills a vital role of service in the local church. Ordination of a Deacon refers to the recognition by the Board of Elders of a man's call to the diaconate and his qualification to serve. Such ordination shall be conferred in accordance with procedures delineated in the Church's *Deacons Manual*, and in compliance with *The Book of Church Order*. Deacons do not fill any governing role in the corporation, and ordination confers no governing authority in the church or the corporation upon the deacon.

## 7.4. Licensing

A license may be issued by the Board of Elders and may be given in recognition of a man's service in a ministry. Its aim is to allow a man to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the Church at the discretion of the elders.<sup>51</sup> Licenses will be evaluated—and issued or renewed—periodically at the discretion of the elders. Licenses are issued only to members of Crossway Church.

## 7.5. Commissioning

When local-church certification is required for ministry where ordination would be unnecessary or inappropriate, a person may be commissioned by the Board of Elders to minister. This authorization continues as long as the opportunity to minister remains in effect and as long as the person maintains the qualifications for ministry, as determined by the Elders upon periodic review.

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<sup>51</sup> The United States Internal Revenue Service defines ministers as follows, "Ministers are individuals who are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed by a religious body constituting a church or church denomination. Ministers have the authority to conduct religious worship, perform sacerdotal functions, and administer ordinances or sacraments according to the prescribed tenets and practices of that church or denomination. If a church or denomination ordains some ministers and licenses or commissions others, anyone licensed or commissioned must be able to perform substantially all the religious functions of an ordained minister to be treated as a minister for social security purposes" (IRS Pub. 517).

## **8. ADVISORY GROUPS**

The Elder Board may create one or more advisory groups, for such terms as deemed fit by the Elder Board. Such advisory groups shall have no vote or governance role, but shall serve the Elder Board in the specified advisory capacity. The members of such advisory groups must be active Church members.

## **9. CHURCH MEMBERS**

### **9.1. Membership Universal and Local**

As a concept distinct from corporate membership, which refers to the Elder Board, the Church follows the New Testament concept of church membership: that each person regenerated by the Holy Spirit and responding in repentance and faith toward Jesus Christ is a unique and indispensable part of the organism which is Christ's body and all such persons are members of the universal body of Christ (1 Cor. 1:2). Membership in this Body of Christ is the grounds for fellowship between Christians. However, the Bible identifies local churches as those Christians in a locality who by the leadership of God and common agreement join together under recognized local leadership and governance for the purpose of worship, instruction, mission, and fellowship.

### **9.2. Church Polity Regarding Members**

*The Book of Church Order* addresses the qualifications, responsibilities, discipline process, and disqualification of members. The sections of *The Book of Church Order* applicable to Church members are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth in Section 9 of the Bylaws.

### **9.3. Participation in Church Life**

Church members are called of God to participate in the life of the church in many vital ways. Elders will regularly meet with and solicit feedback from members on the direction and the life of the church, as practicable. Members may also be called upon to participate in decision-making in regards to the ordination of elders and deacons, and other key decisions. However, such participation is not binding, does not nullify the authority of the elders and/or directors to govern the Church or Corporation, and does not contradict *The Book of Church Order*.

### **9.4. Church Discipline**

The discipline of Church members is addressed in the Church's Statement of Biblical Morality in Section 2.1.2.1 of the Bylaws.

### **9.5. Resignation of Membership**

A Church member may resign from his Church membership by submitting a written communication to one or more of the elders at any time, which shall be effective upon formal

acceptance by the Board. However, if such resignation is an attempt to avoid the process of Church discipline, the Board will not accept the resignation until that process is completed to the satisfaction of the Board.

If a member becomes inactive for 6 months and fails to attend Caregroup and/or Sunday morning gatherings, they shall be removed from the members roll. The elder board may grant an extension of membership on a case by case basis.

#### **9.6. Removal from Roll**

When a Church member resigns his Church membership or he is removed from Church membership due to unrepentant sin or doctrinal error, his name will be removed from the Church membership roll.

#### **9.7. Confidentiality**

Though every reasonable effort shall be made to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a pastoral counseling context, there will be times when to properly fulfill their spiritual and leadership responsibilities, the Church's elders may, as they deem necessary or appropriate, share confidential information with one another, Church members, civil authorities, or others they deem may be part of the solution or problem. They may do this for the purpose of counsel or the purpose of protecting others from the effects of a Church member's sin, or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the people of the Church.

#### **9.8. Settlement of Disputes**

In any dispute arising between any members of the church (regardless of role: e.g., elder, deacon or member), the dispute may be resolved by the Board of Elders (or a duly appointed Committee of the Board). In such cases, decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each non-conflicted/non-accused elder regarding one another before himself and striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-3). Any elder(s) accused shall recuse himself/themselves from the final decision made.

9.8.1. Disputes between members of the church which cannot be resolved privately may be adjudicated by due process under the oversight of the Board of Elders in obedience to biblical principles of conflict mediation, arbitration and reconciliation, and in compliance with procedures delineated in the Church's *Policy Manual* and *The Book of Church Order*, and as presented in the membership application signed by all who join the church.

9.8.2. In such cases every attempt shall be made to resolve conflicts via these means, except in such matters as involve criminal implications. In such cases legal due process may be mandated by civil law and shall be deemed permissible by the elders, if not required. If no legal process is mandated, church members will be expected (unless, at the discretion of the Board, other recourse

is judged permissible) to ask the church for mediation in all personal disputes including such matters as alleged breaches of contracts, sale of real or personal property, and/or loss of employment or employment discrimination.<sup>52</sup>

## **10. SEAL**

The Corporation may have a seal in the form determined by the Elder Board. Said seal may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed or affixed or otherwise reproduced, or by writing the word "SEAL" beside the signature of an authorized officer of the Corporation.

## **11. FISCAL MATTERS**

### **11.1 Deposits**

The Elder Board shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the Corporation.

### **11.2 Checks**

All checks or demands for money and notes of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers or such other persons as the Elder Board may from time to time designate.

### **11.3 Fiscal Year**

The Elder Board shall have the power to fix, and from time to time to change, the fiscal year of the Corporation. Unless otherwise fixed by the Board, the fiscal year shall commence on September 1 and shall terminate on August 31.

### **11.4 Designated Contributions**

The Corporation may accept any designated contribution, grant, bequest or devise provided it is consistent with the Corporation's (1) mission and spiritual priorities as determined from time to time by the Board, (2) budget process and fiscal restrictions, (3) full ownership and control of the funds or assets, and (4) tax-exempt purposes, as set forth in the Articles and these Bylaws. As so limited, donor-designated contributions will be accepted for special funds, purposes or uses, and such designations generally will be honored. The Corporation shall reserve all right, title and interest in and to, and control of such contributions, as well as full discretion as to the ultimate expenditure or distribution thereof in connection with any special fund, purpose or use.

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<sup>52</sup> Questions for legal and/or insurance company counsel: (1) What about civil cases/lawsuits? (2) Does our Membership Profile statement pass legal muster? (3) Does a policy that expects this of church members affect our insurability?

### **11.5 Books and Records**

The Corporation shall keep at its office correct and complete books and records of account, the complete copies of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the activities and transactions of the Corporation, minutes of the proceedings of the Elder Board and any committee of the Board, and a current list of the directors and officers of the Corporation and their residence addresses. Any of the books, minutes, and records of the Corporation may be in written form or in any other form capable of conversion into written form within a reasonable time.

### **11.6 Loans to Directors and Officers Prohibited**

No loans shall be made by the Corporation to its directors or officers. Any director or officer who assents to or participates in the making of any such loan shall be liable to the Corporation for the amount of such loan until it is repaid. Nothing in this section shall bar any director or officer from receiving approved compensation in their employee capacities, or approved payments from the Corporation's benevolence fund in accordance with the policy and procedures governing such a fund, provided they do not participate in the decision to grant such benevolence.

### **11.7 Benevolence Fund**

Consistent with Biblical teaching to share with those in need, the Corporation may establish a benevolence fund to meet material and financial needs of Church members and others. This fund shall be administered under a policy which sets forth the funds' purpose, procedures for administration, and objective criteria for selection of recipients for financial assistance.

### **11.8 Accounting and Fiduciary Guidelines**

The directors and officers of the Corporation shall conduct their affairs with integrity in the sight of God and men, and shall to that end maintain prudent and responsible control and accountability over all funds they receive and ensure that all funds are dedicated to the Corporation's tax-exempt purposes. Toward that end, the directors and officers shall implement practices, procedures, and / or policies that position the Corporation to be a model of faithful stewardship and quality internal accounting controls and procedures. In the case where elders from the regional assembly serve as directors of the corporation, they may appoint a financial audit and budget review committee of non-ordained individuals to serve locally.

## **12. INDEMNIFICATION**

Any person made or threatened to be made a party to any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, by reason of the fact that he, his testator or intestate, is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation, may be indemnified by the Corporation, and the Corporation may advance his related expenses, to the fullest extent permitted by law. The Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance to indemnify:

12.1 Itself for any obligation which it incurs as a result of the indemnification specified above; and

12.2 Its directors, officers, employees, and agents.

### **13. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a supermajority (two-thirds) of the Elder Board at any regular meeting of the Board, or at any special meeting of the Board if notice of the proposed alteration or repeal is contained in the notice of such meeting or notice is properly waived as outlined in Section 5.2 of these Bylaws.

**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION  
OF  
CROSSWAY CHURCH OF LANCASTER**

**ARTICLE 1: Name.** The name of the corporation is Crossway Church of Lancaster, hereinafter referred to as "the Church."

**ARTICLE 2: Purposes.** The Church is a local church that shall provide opportunities to worship God, pray, teach, exercise spiritual discipline and care and minister to one another’s spiritual and physical needs as local members of the body of Jesus Christ. The Church also shall minister to the spiritual and physical needs of Christians living in other localities, and individuals outside the body of Christ as the Spirit of God leads, freely preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and establishing and discipling believers in the full counsel of God’s Word and growing fellowship with Jesus as our Living Savior and Lord. This Church also is organized to encourage and serve other gatherings of Christ's body and expressions of the local church. To carry out the stated purposes, the Church may do any and all lawful acts which may be necessary or useful for the furtherance of said purposes.

**ARTICLE 3: Principal Office.** The street address of the principal office of the Church is 330 Barbara Street, Millersville, PA 17551.

**ARTICLE 4: Initial Registered Agent.** The name of the initial registered agent of the Church in Pennsylvania is Peter Privitera, whose address is 17 Hemlock Drive, Lancaster, PA 17602. The address provided herein is identical to the business office of the initial registered agent.

**ARTICLE 5: No Capital Stock.** The Church has no authority to issue capital stock.

**ARTICLE 6: Elder Board.** The Church shall be governed in all matters of doctrine, church life, and corporate governance by its Elder Board. The number of persons who serve on the Elder Board and the manner in which the Elders shall be elected or appointed shall be provided in the Bylaws of the Church.

The names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as the initial Elder Board until the first annual meeting or until their successors shall be appointed and qualified are:

NAME	ADDRESS
William Haughery	2105 West Ridge Drive, Lancaster, PA 17603
Stephen Heitland	303 Radcliff Road, Willow Street, PA 17584
Douglas Plank	130 Kready Avenue, Millersville, PA 17551

Peter Privitera            17 Hemlock Drive, Lancaster, PA 17602  
Kurt Weaver                1735 Valette Drive, Lancaster, PA 17602

**ARTICLE 7: Tax-Exempt Provisions.** The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, educational, and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or a related section of a successor statute (hereinafter "Code") and as a local church commissioned by Jesus Christ. The property of this Church is irrevocably dedicated to religious, educational, and charitable purposes, and no part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, elders, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Church and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in these Articles.

The Church may receive property by gift, devise or bequest, invest and reinvest the same, and apply the income and principal thereof, as the Elder Board may from time to time determine, either directly or through contributions to any charitable organization or organizations, exclusively for religious, educational, or charitable purposes.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Church shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Code or by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Code, or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code.

Upon dissolution of the Church, the Elder Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all of the assets of the Church exclusively for the purposes of the organization in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious, educational, or charitable purposes, as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code as the Elder Board shall determine.

**ARTICLE 8: Duration.** The period of duration for the Church is perpetual.

**ARTICLE 9: Members.** The Church as a local church has church members determined by ecclesiastical qualifications, who have the rights and obligations of members of the local Church congregation, but church membership as such conveys no standing, responsibility or authority for governance of the Church. The qualifications for church membership are stipulated in the Church's Bylaws and also governed by the Holy Bible.

**ARTICLE 10: Incorporators.** The name and address of the incorporator(s) are:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
William Haughery	2105 West Ridge Drive, Lancaster, PA 17603

## **Child Protection Policy (from our Entrust Manual)**

In order to protect our children, whom we see as gifts given by the Lord, all persons having oversight of children in public Crossway Church meetings are required to read this Child Protection Policy and complete background checks secured by the church. Our desire is to protect our children from potential harm to the best of our ability.

### Purpose

The Child Protection Policy has several purposes:

- 1 To protect the children participating in public Crossway Church meetings.
- 2 To protect the childcare volunteers from unfounded accusations of abuse.
- 3 To protect the church from harmful litigation.

For the purpose of this policy, there are two categories of suspected child abuse:

- 1 Abuse that occurs during public Crossway Church meetings.
- 2 Abuse that occurs outside public Crossway Church meetings and is suspected by a childcare volunteer.

### Screening Requirements

The responsibility for screening childcare volunteers rests primarily with the pastors. In order to protect both our children and our childcare volunteers, all those working with children must be screened. Screening will consist of the following:

- 1 Only church members and their children can serve in public Crossway Church meetings. Teenage sons of members will be asked to serve in other ministries.
- 2 An application form for volunteer service must be completed before participating in all public Crossway Church meetings.
- 3 Appropriate background check forms must be completed by all adult childcare volunteers.
- 4 Persons convicted of child abuse may not serve in childcare for Crossway Church meetings.

## Definition of Child Abuse<sup>53</sup>

Child abuse, according to the Child Protective Services Law, means intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

- Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
- Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
- Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
- Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
- Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.

Child abuse also includes certain acts in which the act itself constitutes abuse without any resulting injury or condition. These recent acts include any of the following:

Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.

Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.

Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.

Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.

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<sup>53</sup> Taken from: <http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/faqs/index.htm>. Accessed 9 June 2016.

Interfering with the breathing of a child.

Causing a child to be present during the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.

Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the parent knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or III sexual offender or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.

"Recent" is defined as an abusive act within two years from the date the report is made to ChildLine. Sexual abuse, serious mental injury, serious physical neglect and deaths have no time limit.

#### Guidelines for Preventing Child Abuse during Sunday Morning Children's Ministry

- 1 Every classroom must have two or more adult childcare volunteers.
  - a Volunteers are never to be alone one-on-one with a child.
  - b Any teenage helpers are counted in addition to the two adults specified.
- 2 Department Leaders are assigned to supervise childcare volunteers and will spot check classes unannounced.
- 3 Childcare volunteers must obtain permission from your Department Leader before taking children outside the building.
- 4 Diapers are changed in the open classroom.
- 5 All workers must follow the bathroom policy:
  - a Lower Classrooms: Shared bathrooms are provided for some classrooms. The door connected to the opposite classroom should be closed and locked while the restroom is in use. The door opening to your classroom should be split so that the lower portion is closed, and the upper portion is slightly ajar.  
For rooms without a shared bathroom, follow the policy detailed for the Upper Classrooms (below).
  - b Upper Classrooms: a bathroom pass is provided in each classroom for children to go on their own, one at a time. An usher will be present in the lobby for assistance and security at all times.
- 6 An usher will be present in the CM hallway at all times during classes. He will be available to help if another adult is needed so that adults are never alone in a one-on-one situation with a child, or in case of emergency.

## Reporting Procedures

The following adults are considered mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse:

- A person licensed or certified to practice in any health-related field under the jurisdiction of the Department of State.
- A medical examiner, coroner or funeral director.
- An employee of a health care facility or provider licensed by the Department of Health, who is engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of individuals.
- A school employee.
- An employee of a child-care service who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.
- An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, is a person responsible for the child's welfare or has direct contact with children.
- An employee of a social services agency who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- A peace officer or law enforcement official.
- An emergency medical services provider certified by the Department of Health.
- An employee of a public library who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above, who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- An independent contractor who has direct contact with children.

- An attorney affiliated with an agency, institution, organization or other entity, including a school or regularly established religious organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children.
- A foster parent.

An adult family member who is a person responsible for the child's welfare and provides services to a child in a family living home, community home for individuals with an intellectual disability or host home for children which are subject to supervision or licensure by the department under Articles IX and X of the Public Welfare Code.

When must a mandated reporter make a report?

A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
- The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
- A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
- An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

How does a mandated reporter make a report if they suspect child abuse?

Mandated reporters must make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to ChildLine either electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or by calling 800.932.0313.

If you suspect abuse occurring during a public Crossway Church meeting:

- 1 Contact ChildLine at 800.932.0313 first.
- 2 Notify the child's parents immediately.
- 3 After notifying the parents, immediately notify two people from the following list. Contact the two top-most people that are immediately available. See the "Who's Who" Section of this manual for the names of the Children's Ministry Directors and Department Leaders:
  - a The Senior Pastor
  - b A Crossway Church Pastor
  - c The Crossway Church volunteer responsible for overseeing the meeting. (i.e. Children's Ministry Director, Caregroup Leader, Christianity Explored Leader)
  - d A Crossway Church volunteer responsible for assisting the overseer.
- 4 Church Leadership and the parents will interact with the authorities and see the matter through.
- 5 Resist the urge to discuss your suspicions with anyone other than the authorities and the parties involved.

If you suspect abuse is occurring outside Children's Ministry:

- 1 Contact ChildLine at 800.932.0313 first.
- 2 Immediately (within the hour) notify two people from the following list. Contact the two top-most people that are immediately available. See the "Who's Who" Section of this manual for the names of the Children's Ministry Directors and Department Leaders:
  - a The Senior Pastor
  - b A Crossway Church Pastor
  - c The Crossway Church volunteer responsible for overseeing the meeting. (i.e. Children's Ministry Director, Caregroup Leader, Christianity Explored Leader)
  - d A Crossway Church volunteer responsible for assisting the overseer.
- 3 Church Leadership will contact the parents.
- 4 Resist the urge to discuss your suspicions with anyone other than the parties involved.

## Signs of Child Abuse

Children's Ministry workers should be alert to the physical signs of abuse, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below (Sloan I., *Child Abuse: Governing Law and Legislation*, [1983]).

### 1 Physical signs may include:

- a lacerations
- b irritation, pain or injury to genital area
- c difficulty with urination
- d discomfort when sitting
- e torn or bloody underclothing
- f venereal disease

### 2 Behavioral signs may include:

- a unusual anxiety when approaching the church or nursery area
- b nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- c sexual self-consciousness
- d "acting out" of sexual behavior
- e withdrawal from church activities or friends

### 3 Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- a "I don't like [a particular person]."
- b "[A particular person] does things to me when we're alone."
- c "I don't like to be alone with [a particular person]."
- d "[A particular person] fooled around with me."