



CITY FELLOWSHIP
BAPTIST CHURCH

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

WHO WE ARE

THE CORE DOCTRINE OF CITY FELLOWSHIP

The history of City Fellowship begins with our “mother” church, Northbrook in Three Way, TN, who has always had a deep desire and a vision to be involved in spreading the good news through the planting of new congregations. In the fall of 2008, the Lord moved on the hearts of three families who, though members of Northbrook were all living in the downtown area. After a season of prayer, the Lord added several more to the number of those who felt His calling to downtown Jackson and a “core group” was sent out to begin the process of planting a new church. After several months of planning, City Fellowship met for the first time “officially” on February 7, 2009.

What we believe can be summarized in two of the enclosed documents:

- A. *Confession of Faith* (Appendix A)
- B. *Theological Distinctives* (Appendix B)

CONFESSION OF FAITH

(APPENDIX A)

I. Concerning the Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, written by men, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The scriptures are inerrant and totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed. They shall stand; therefore, until the last day as the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions are tried. All Scripture is God's revelation of Himself and is, in total, a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

II. Concerning the One True God

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal and undivided in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

Genesis 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; Ephesians 4:5,6

- i. **The Father:*** We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, and that He hears prayer and answers it according to His purpose. He reconciles and saves, from sin and death, all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

ii. The Son: We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe Him to be our substitute; His death satisfying the penalty of the law, and his sinless life satisfying the requirements of the law on our behalf. We believe in Jesus' bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and His universally visible return to earth.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23

iii. The Holy Spirit: We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict of sin, regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, comforter and guide.

John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

III. Concerning Man and his Fall

We believe that God made humanity male and female in His own image, as the crown of creation, in order that man might have fellowship with Him and enjoy His Glory forever. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God, thus sin entered the world making all men sinners in Adam. Being estranged from, and yet accountable to, his Maker, mankind became subject to divine wrath, and apart from a special work of grace, is utterly incapable of returning to God. Conceived in sin, having from birth a corrupt nature, he is both inherently and actively, at enmity with God.

Genesis 3:1-24; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-14

IV. Concerning Salvation

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man and that there is no other

name by which men must be saved. At the center of all sound doctrine is the Cross of Jesus Christ. His death stands as a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and righteous wrath while simultaneously demonstrating His mysterious love and amazing grace. Through union with Jesus Christ in His life, death, resurrection and ascension, salvation is eternally secured for all who repent and believe.

Salvation, as it is broadly understood, includes...

- i. **Regeneration:*** Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work completely of God's grace, whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart brought about by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

John 1:12-13; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:1, Ezekiel 36:26-27, James 1:17-18; Ephesians 2:4-5

- ii. **Justification:*** Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. It includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life, which are not bestowed because of any righteous works which the believer has done but solely through faith. It is by this faith that Christ's perfect righteousness is freely imputed to the believer by God.

Romans 3:21-28; Romans 5:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- iii. **Sanctification:*** Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

John 17:17-19; Romans 6:1-23; Romans 8:1-14; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

- iv. **Glorification:*** Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. At the point of glorification, being achieved only after this life,

the believer will be perfectly righteous, like his Lord. Thus, he will dwell with his Creator and Lord, sharing in His glory for all eternity.

John 17:22; 5:2; Romans 8:17-18,30; Romans 9:23; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:27; 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

VI. Concerning the Church

We believe that the “Universal” Church, as the Bride of Christ, is made up of the elect of God from all nations and all times and will be finally revealed on the last day when Jesus Christ comes again to gather all those that the Father has given Him. We further believe that a local church body, as a regional expression of this church universal, should limit membership only to those professing faith in Christ alone for salvation and submitting to water baptism as well as the authority of that local congregation. Having bound themselves together by covenant in the faith, the local church should be marked by observation of the ordinances, biblical exercise of spiritual gifts and church discipline. Accordingly, the lives of its membership should give evidence of regeneration and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22; John 6:39; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

VII. Concerning the Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two vital ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism is by water and in accordance with the commands of Christ. It is properly applied only to those individuals professing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. The Lord's Supper is a powerful, symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the cup, remember the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

VIII. Concerning the Last Things

We believe that the Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom and the restoration of His creation in the form of the "new heavens and the new earth". In this Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the justified, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

Matthew 16:27; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:11-15

THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

(APPENDIX B)

At City Fellowship we do not believe that holding to conscience in regards to our understanding of the scriptures compromises our ability to work with brothers and sisters that disagree with us on certain issues. In fact, clarity of belief often helps us understand one another better. To this end we offer this document as a clarification of our views on certain “second tier” doctrines that can sometimes prove to be points of contention within the church. While the eldership will believe and teach joyfully and uniformly on these issues, it is important to note that these beliefs are not requirements for membership at City Fellowship. We do require however, that all those submitting to membership refrain from divisive teaching or arguing against these positions. This requirement, of course, should not lead anyone to believe that the leadership of City fellowship is not open to peaceful, biblical correction on these matters, we simply ask that concerns on these doctrines and their teachings are brought to the eldership rather than allowed to grow into divisions or “camps” within the body.

Therefore, in the fear of the Lord and with reverence for his word we believe in:

Divine Sovereignty

The God of the Bible is the creator of the visible and invisible universe and He is the sovereign ruler of it. To use the words of Paul, God does all things according to the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:11), exercising His providence over all events from the flight of sparrows (Matthew 10:9) to the affairs of nations (Daniel 4:25).

In particular, God’s sovereignty is on glorious display in the redemption of men. To ensure that God alone receives all glory for the salvation of sinners, He saves His people by grace alone, apart from works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We do not believe, nor do we teach that God’s sovereignty in anyway relieves men of their own moral responsibility (Romans 2:6-8) nor does it compete with God’s desire that all men repent and

be saved (2 Peter 3:9). Rather we believe that it is God's sovereign grace that allows us to evangelize with abandon, confident that there are none who are outside of God's power to save. For while we might plant or water, it is God alone who gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7).

Baptism by Immersion

Because we believe that the ordinance of Baptism is rightfully applied only to those who have believed on Jesus for their salvation, we do not recognize infant baptism, in any form, to be appropriate. The mode of Baptism (sprinkling, pouring or immersion), we find to be less clear in scripture. Therefore, while we have required that all candidates for membership at City Fellowship be baptized as believers, we have not required that they be baptized by the mode of immersion. This allowance should not give the impression that we do not believe that the mode of baptism is extremely important.

We strongly believe that the symbolism of baptism is primarily that of identification with Christ in both His death and resurrection, and we are committed to the teaching and practice thereof. We do so under the conviction that immersion in water is not only the clearest symbolism of the meaning of baptism, but the one with the most convincing biblical evidence. (Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Acts 8:38-39, Mark 1:5)

Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

Because we believe that both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and simultaneously distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Genesis 1:26; 2:18), we further believe that all men and women have been ordained by God to carry out distinct but equally valuable roles in both the home and the church. Our position on these important roles are well summarized by *The Danvers Statement* on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (see attached, page 11).

Elder Led Church Governance

We see the sum of scripture leading us toward recognizing only two biblical roles of governance within the church, that of Elders and Deacons. The term “Elder” in the New Testament is synonymous with “Overseer”, or “Pastor” and refers to those charged with oversight of the church, spiritual shepherding, prayer and ministry of the word (Acts 6:4, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9). Deacons are rightly called “servants”, not being an office for ruling or teaching, but rather carrying out the tasks that allow the church to be the hands and feet of Christ (Acts 6:3, 1 Tim 3:8-13).

We further believe that the Bible calls for multiple elders rather than a single pastor, and that the office, which assumes the responsibilities of *authoritative teaching*, should be reserved for spiritually qualified men (1 Timothy 2:12). The office of Deacon is also subject to biblical qualification, but is open to both men and women (Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:11).

Reconciliation

Sin created not only a great chasm between man and God, but also brought about deep division among men. Through the reconciling power of the cross, God brought down the dividing wall of hostility providing an opportunity for peace between men of all ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds. He made enemies into brothers and strangers into fellow heirs with Christ. City Fellowship purposefully seeks opportunities to bring people of all backgrounds together under the reconciliation provided through Christ’s atoning death (Matthew 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:16-19; Ephesians 2:13-22).

Relocation

We believe that the incarnation of Jesus provides His followers with a model of “ministry in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 8:9). While some ministry can happen from a distance, true church can only take place in life lived together. Therefore we do not believe it is the church’s right to remove itself from locations that are rife with spiritual and temporal need, and attempt to minister from afar

(Hebrews 10:34). Rather her members should be characterized by lives lived alongside the hurting and vulnerable of the area God has placed them in. In Jackson, like most cities of any size, that population is generally found in the city center, and so we feel called to engage with, and seek the good of our city for the sake of the Gospel (Jeremiah 29:7).

The Continuation of the Spiritual Gifts

While nearly all churches believe that all Christians are given “gifts of grace” (Charismata in the Greek) by the Holy Spirit, there are some who believe that certain gifts (often referred to as the “speaking gifts” like tongues and prophecy) died with the original apostles. This belief is commonly called “cessationism”, referring to the ceasing of these particular gifts.

In contrast, we at City Fellowship believe that the clear counsel of scripture is that all gifts of the spirit continue to be available to the church even today (a view called “continuationism”). We believe scripture calls us to pursue the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1), to exercise them in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40), and subject them to the word (1 Corinthians 14:37) for the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7) and the commendation of the faith (1 Corinthians 14:23-25).

Church Discipline

We believe that scripture compels us, in the fear of the Lord, to maintain the purity of His church. When one of the members is living in ongoing, unrepentant sin, it is the duty of that local body to remove the offending brother or sister from the fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:2). This is to be done among a people who have carried out the process of discipline (Matthew 18:17, Titus 2:15, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13), with love and broken hearts, ever seeking the restoration of the errant brother or sister (Galatians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8).

THE DANVERS STATEMENT

(ON BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD)

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

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Genesis 2:18,21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:12-14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Genesis 2:16-18,21-24; 3:1-13; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Genesis 3:1-7,12,16).
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; Galatians 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

- In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7).
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Daniel 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29; 1 Peter 3:1-2).
 8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
 9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Corinthians 12:7-21).
 10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.