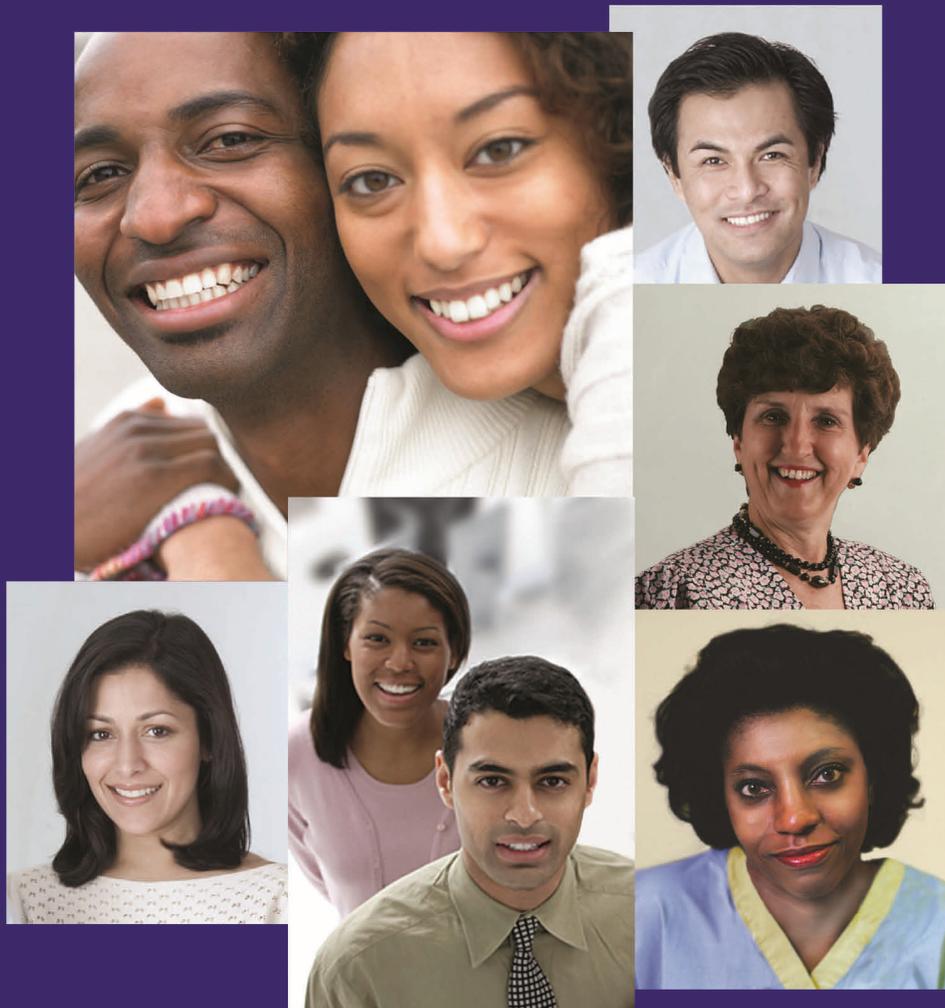


Participating Membership Manual



Crossroads Community Cathedral



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A significant step in your lifelong
journey of following Christ

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Preface

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL EXISTS AS A CHURCH TO follow the teaching of the Holy Scripture in reaching irreligious people and turning them into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. This is the stated *Great Commission* of Jesus (Matthew 28:19,20). Amassing crowds, building buildings, even reaching the lost and bringing them to a “decision” falls short of this purpose unless people become mature believers and follow God in everyday life.

Our goal is to be a biblical community. That means we must grow in our knowledge of, and most importantly, our obedience to the Bible. To be a community we must become interdependent. We must function as a Body, rather than as saved-but-isolated saints. That means we’ll have to learn to let down our guard some, be more vulnerable with each other, support each other—in short, be a family to each other.

We want to fulfill the *Great Commission*. We take the call to disciple every nation seriously because it was Jesus’ last and most expansive command to His church. We must continually keep an eye on the world so that we may reach every creature with His gospel message.

How do we know if we’re doing this effectively? We want to give ourselves a target to hit. We want to hold up a measuring stick that reflects what we understand to be biblical success in these areas. What does a person on the road to full devotion look like? This is what we will define in this workbook then affirm all among us who are on that road.

We will call these people “*Participating Members*.” They are no longer spectators. They’re more than sideline cheerleaders. They are those who are down on the playing field and are now actively part of the game. Only it’s not a game. It’s our *very reason for being on earth*. It’s what God wants from us during this dispensation of time.

Becoming a member is the culmination of a series of important steps. But it's not an end in itself. To become a Participating Member of the Crossroads Community is to affirm both where you are spiritually and where you are going. It's a step of discipleship, another milestone on the lifelong path that was laid out by Jesus. It's part of the path that true believers walk with dedication and resolve.

How does a person become a *Participating Member*? It's a process of "Investigation, Affirmation, Confirmation, and Celebration." You begin with a personal Bible study and reflection time. That's the investigation part. When you complete that study you agree to a series of affirmations. Then you meet with a trained leader to be confirmed. After your formal confirmation we'll celebrate your new membership together with the rest of the Body during a scheduled service.

Are you ready to seriously consider *Participating Membership*? Can you sense God stirring in your heart? If you accept the challenge to join with us to fulfill His mission, then read on. Take this significant step in your lifelong journey of following Christ.

SECTION 1

**MEMBERSHIP AT
CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL**



Why Membership?

*“So we, who are many, are one Body in Christ,
and individually members one of another.”*
(Romans 12:5)

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL IS A PLACE WHERE THE message of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. But proclaiming the Gospel alone does not make us a church. What makes us a church, not just an evangelistic organization, is the degree to which we are a *community*. We have attendees and visitors but we also have members. People can *belong* to our fellowship. They can know they’re *connected*.

Some assume that as long as you profess Christ there is no need for any further identification with a local church. Isn’t it enough to simply call yourself a Christian and attend services somewhere regularly? What is the point of formal membership?

Three Reasons

WE BELIEVE THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE REASONS for having formal membership. First, we believe the concept of membership is biblical. While the term “church member” is never used, the concept is implicit throughout the New Testament. Believers clearly identified themselves with a specific local Body and were challenged to become devoted participants. Second, formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding. Crossroads Community, like any organization, attracts the uncommitted. Some are seekers, some are observers, and some are guests. We hope that will always be the case. But at some point it is important to identify those who truly comprise the “flock” at Crossroads—the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church. These committed “family members” are the ones who should receive priority in the allocation of finite church resources (as commanded in Galatians 6:10). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, experience shows that membership benefits the individual. In a culture where commitment is no longer highly valued, recognizable membership is an important step that

moves each of us out of the shadows of good intentions and into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to “step out of the stands” and publicly affirm a commitment to Christ and to a specific local Body. Formal membership can be a significant defining moment.

“Positional” and “Participating”

BUT HOW EXACTLY DO YOU DEFINE a “Member”? This is a legitimate question. The Bible actually describes two kinds of “membership.” Scripture is full of references to the once-and-for-all union with Christ and His Body. This happens at the instant of your conversion (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22; 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-22). At that moment, you become a “positional member” in the universal Church of Jesus Christ, based solely on His merit and grace. “Positional membership” is eternal and unchanging. But then the Bible also urges “positional members” to continue growing by becoming “Participating Members” in a specific local assembly (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:25-31; 14:12,26; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Timothy 3:14-15). Obviously, you may be a “Participating Member” of several different local bodies during the course of your lifetime while maintaining a permanent “positional membership” in Christ’s universal Church. We cannot see the invisible bond of “positional membership”, but we can identify those who are “Participating Members” here at Crossroads.

Defining “Participating Membership”

HOW CAN “Participating Membership” be described biblically? We attempt to summarize it by using “Five G’s.”

Grace

*The individual appropriation of the saving work of Christ
followed by baptism as a believer (Ephesians 2:8,9)*

Growth

*The ongoing evidence of a changing life and pursuit of Christ-likeness
(2 Peter 3:17,18)*

Group

*Participation in the Body of Christ and connection with others
in significant relationships (Acts 2:46)*

Gifts

*Seeking to live a Spirit-filled life serving Christ's Body according to the spiritual giftedness and passion that is God given
(1 Corinthians 12:7,11,18; Romans 12:6-8)*

Good Stewardship

*Honoring God with one's material resources and supporting the church using the biblical precedent of the tithe as a goal to reach or exceed as God prospers
(Malachi 3:10-12; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Philippians 4:11-19)*

We believe these statements capture the essential “marks” of someone devoted to Christ and His Church. These characteristics are biblical. As such, we believe they should provide the criteria for Participating Membership at Crossroads. Simply put, if you are evidencing these characteristics within our Body, then you truly are a Participating Member. As a church, we want to formally affirm that fact and celebrate it.

The Membership Process

THE PROCESS OF BECOMING a Participating Member has four stages:

1. INVESTIGATION—The prospective member completes a Bible study exploring membership in general, the Five G's, and the distinctives of Crossroads. Each person does the work at his or her own pace.
2. AFFIRMATION—The prospective member now responds to questions based on the study completed. This is a time of self-evaluation where each individual affirms whether the marks of Participating Membership are true in his or her life.
3. CONFIRMATION—The prospective member meets with a trained leader (usually someone the prospective member knows) to discuss the affirmations made and to confirm Participating Membership. Any difficult issues are referred to a supervising staff member or elder.
4. CELEBRATION—New Participating Members are presented at a designated service with their support group present so that our whole church family can rejoice together.

Individuals will also reaffirm their commitment to Participating Membership periodically. Our intent is not to burden people by asking for this reaffirmation, but to see that membership remains a meaningful covenant for all who claim it.

Where Do I Go From Here?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE Participating Membership at Crossroads Community Cathedral, all you need to do is continue what you are doing now. Read this manual and complete the study materials. Then schedule a confirmation interview (see next chapter for how to do that) and discuss your answers to the response and affirmation pages. After you're confirmed we'll celebrate your membership approval at a future weekend service. If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to call the church office. The membership process at Crossroads has been designed to be personally enriching, a discipling step in your ongoing walk with Christ. We hope you will experience the many benefits of taking this step soon.

Steps Toward Becoming A Member

AS WE'VE SEEN IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, we who are in Christ are technically already full members of the Body of Christ. We have an invisible, unbreakable bond that links us to Christ and to each other. But Participating Membership is about making the invisible visible. The outline on the next page explains the four steps involved in formal affiliation with Crossroads.

Becoming a Participating Member at Crossroads

Investigation
by
The Prospective
Member

During this phase a prospective member learns about becoming a Participating Member. At his or her own pace, the prospective member studies Scripture as it relates to the characteristics of a Participating Member and learns about the unique philosophy and distinctives of the Crossroads Community.

Affirmation
by
The Prospective
Member

Using a questionnaire, the prospective member now privately responds to the material studied during the investigation phase. The prospective member declares in writing his or her intentions regarding joining Crossroads and honestly notes any reservations or uncertainties that need to be discussed during the membership interview that follows.

Confirmation
of
The Prospective
Member

This phase is simply a personal interview, conducted by someone in leadership at Crossroads. Key membership issues are discussed and any concerns or unusual circumstances affecting membership are covered. The interviewer then affirms the prospective member or refers remaining uncertainties to be resolved by a staff member or elder.

Celebration
with
The New Member

Now that the prospective member has been affirmed by a leader in the church all that remains is to officially announce to the Body that the person has become a Participating Member and to celebrate that fact. The new Participating Member also receives a Participating Membership Certificate and their names are inscribed on the roster.

Investigation and Affirmation

YOU ARE CURRENTLY in the investigation phase. As you read, study and respond you will be getting a clear picture of Participating Membership. You will also gain a better picture of your own spiritual situation. At the completion of your personal Bible study you will fill out an affirmation sheet. Point by point, you'll honestly assess your current spiritual health and commitment to the distinctives of Crossroads. This guide is personal and confidential –you will discuss your answers during the confirmation interview but you keep the affirmation sheet afterward. The more honest you are with yourself, the more valuable this part of the membership process will be.

The Confirmation Interview

THE NEXT STEP after completing the independent study is to set up an interview with one of our trained leaders. This will normally be a lay leader you know. If you are not already connected to a lay leader, you will need to call the church office and a leader will be assigned to meet with you. The purpose of the interview is NOT to determine whether you are a “perfect Christian” (whatever that is!). The purpose is to affirm your commitment to Christ, to this church Body, and to the lifelong process of spiritual growth.

Occasionally an issue will be raised during the interview that requires more discussion. *No interviewer may deny a prospective member confirmation upon his or her reservations alone* — if there are concerns, the next step will be to bring in a division leader or an elder. Only after at least two interviewers have the same concern may someone be asked to delay being confirmed. (Even this is not really a denial of membership so much as seeking to address an issue that needs attention.) A specific plan will be laid out and agreed to by everyone so that the prospective member knows what should happen in order to move toward full Participating Membership. It is important to recognize that when issues are brought to light that put the membership process on hold, confidentiality will be maintained.

At the completion of the interview, the interviewer will confirm you as a Participating Member. He or she simply signs the New Participating Member Confirmation Form to indicate that all requirements have been met and then you return that sheet to the church office.

Celebration

THE FINAL STEP is to celebrate publicly your new Participating Membership. Throughout the year we'll designate various times during a scheduled weekend service to welcome new members in an open but non-threatening way. You as a new Participating Member will be welcomed and the other Participating Members will have opportunity to rejoice in reception of another member of this local Body of believers.

Responsibilities And Privileges Of Membership

IN A PHRASE, the main responsibility of every member of Crossroads Community Cathedral is to participate in the life of the church by simply following Christ. We are to do as He would do and live as He would live. The very thing that qualifies you as a Participating Member — the Five G's — is all that will ever be expected of you. To live in grace, commit to growth, be in a group, use your gifts, and practice good stewardship is the standard. It is not very complicated.

Four Responsibilities

ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT THE REQUIREMENTS of membership is to break them down into the following four areas.

RESPONSIBILITY #1 — Personal Purity: *To bring to the church a submitted, Spirit-filled self.*

Our connection with the Lord is the source of everything we have to give to others, and Jesus made it clear: “Apart from Me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5). A yielded heart is a powerful tool in God’s hands. When we become convinced that our own personal purity and spiritual maturity are the greatest gifts we can bring to each other, we will diligently seek God and submit to His Spirit daily.

RESPONSIBILITY #2 — Relational Integrity: *To pursue honorable and loving relationships: in the family, among friends, coworkers and neighbors, and in the Body.*

It does no good to keep one part of our body healthy if we continually mistreat another. The unhealthy part can jeopardize the well-being (and even the very life) of the strong parts—a diseased liver will eventually stop even a healthy heart from beating. Our relational world is a lot like our physical body—we cannot afford to neglect any part of it and think it will have no adverse effect on other parts of our lives. Participating Members take seriously Paul’s admonition: “So far as it is up to you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18). We must pursue loving behavior with all people in our world and reconciliation in strained relationships. Though there are times others will not allow us to make peace, we do what we can so that we can say with Paul, “For our proud confidence is this...that in holiness and godly sincerity...we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you” (2 Corinthians 1:12).

RESPONSIBILITY #3 — Organizational Loyalty: *To contribute to the church your time, talents, and treasure and to be responsive to the leadership God has established.*

If someone is a Participating Member of Crossroads Community, that participation will be evident. Other than attending services passively, what does your calendar show about your connection to the church? Would someone watching you over the course of a typical week acknowledge you’re a “player” rather than a sideline observer? Is the church a place where you give or merely take? If everyone was involved with the same degree of passion and loyalty as you are, would this be a healthy church? Are leaders glad you are on the team, or do you make their job harder?

RESPONSIBILITY #4 — Interpersonal Maturity: *To seek to serve more than to be served.*

When Jesus washed His disciples’ feet, He not only wanted to show His love toward them—He pointed out a profound implication of His actions. He asked, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you” (John 13:12-15).

Sometimes we fall into the regretful, almost infantile attitude of wanting “the church” to do more for us. But WE are the church. If the church isn’t doing something, WE’RE the ones not doing it, and WE’RE the only ones who can make it different. Too often we slip into a consumer mentality—we “shop” for services we think are important. But we’re not the shoppers at a spiritual convenience store: we’re the proprietors here. Stocking the shelves is OUR responsibility. “Meeting needs” is what WE do for others, and in the process, we find out what Jesus meant when He said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Washing feet...isn't that the servant's job? No, it was the Savior’s job. And He told us it was also ours.

Privileges of Membership

JUST AS THE KEY WORD “PARTICIPATING” describes the responsibilities of members, that word also implies that there are benefits. Specifically, being a Participating Member means that you now have the right to influence the key decisions of the church. Those decisions include the affirmation of deacon candidates and the affirmation of capital building programs. Participating Members receive priority for facility usage and staff members’ time (such as weddings, funerals, benevolence needs, personal support in your area of ministry, etc.). From time to time, meetings or other functions are held which are for “members only.” These events are usually called to either inform the core of the church of a major concern or to garner input from the Body. Therefore, they are limited only to those who are participating at all levels of the Five G’s. Finally, virtually all leadership positions in the church require Participating Membership as a prerequisite.

The primary reason to become a Participating Member, however, is not to gain a personal advantage, but to identify ourselves with the characteristics (or marks) of biblical maturity. Since we are all pursuing Him, we ought to be pursuing these qualities as a way to be pleasing to Him.



SECTION 2

**CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL
DISTINCTIVES**



THE VISION OF CROSSROADS

“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
(Luke 19:10)

A Mission, a Vision, a Plan

JESUS CHRIST HAD A MISSION. He came to earth from heaven knowing His purpose. Even at the age of 12, He told his parents, “. . . Did you not know I had to be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). His single-mindedness, determination, and reliance on His heavenly Father’s guidance insured that at the end of His ministry, He could pray confidently, “I have accomplished the work which You gave me to do” (John 17:4).

He also had a vision. He saw the preferable future, the new humanity His mission would make. He knew what He had to be like—and what His followers had to be like—if the world was to sit up and take notice. He built a community of believers—only twelve at first—that would be the foundation of a vast network of followers who would fulfill His vision. Knowing His disciples’ exciting potential but precarious position, Jesus prayed, “As You have sent Me into the world, I also send them into the world” (John 17:18).

Jesus also had a plan. His ministry unfolded in stages, and He said “No” to many opportunities when they were the right things at the wrong time. With no shortage of need, He had to be selective about the people and possibilities in which He invested. Disciples had to be chosen from among many interested volunteers (and sometimes He called people right out of their preoccupation with other interests!). Workers needed to be trained before being sent. Jesus sometimes moved on to new ministry opportunities even when people wanted Him to stay. He recognized that some “ministry growth” would be detrimental to His long-range plan, so He stifled it—He told certain people He’d just healed not to go public. The control He exercised in relation to His ministry was always in response to the leadings of His heavenly Father—and as the appropriate way to facilitate His mission and vision in accordance with His values.

In His Steps

WE WHO CALL OURSELVES JESUS' FOLLOWERS AT Crossroads desire to carry on His mission. We also want to identify our core values and act consistent with them. While the message of Jesus Christ is timeless, the forms and programs we use to further His work are flexible—they must be servants, not masters. We claim no infallibility for any of our ideas, but we believe we'll be more fruitful if we follow a well-defined strategic plan, always remaining open to how the Spirit may take us in new, unexpected directions. Our corporate imperatives will require mid-course corrections as we face future challenges.

Certainly one of the most important truths that we hold is the truth that “People matter to God.” We humbly recognize that we are among the “lost” Jesus came to seek and save. But so many still wander unreached by His love. Because of Jesus, we too now live “to seek and save that which was lost.” This chapter represents our collective beliefs on who we want to be and how we want to live and minister so that we can do that very thing—all to the glory of God.

Our Mission, Vision, and Plan

THE MISSION OF THE CROSSROADS COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS (What We're Doing)

“Our mission is to serve God and man by reaching non-religious people and to turn them into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.”
(Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47)

BECAUSE JESUS CAME TO SEEK and to save the lost, we feel compelled to do the same. But Jesus went beyond rescuing people from hell; He wanted to make them fit for heaven. Through various sub-ministries of the church, we desire people not only to meet Christ but also over time, to grow in their faith so that they live obediently to His commands and become conformed to His character.

THE VISION OF THE CROSSROADS COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS
(What We're Becoming)

“Our Vision is to be a biblically functioning community of believers so that Christ’s redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.”
(Matthew 5:16; Acts 2:40-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13-27)

! **CORE VALUE:** *We believe that excellence honors God and inspires people.*

WE CANNOT FULFILL CHRIST’S MISSION ALONE as individuals. We are a church because God wants us to be something together and represent Him with our unified diversity. Our goal together is to further His kingdom in our midst, but we also, in obedience to His Great commission, labor to extend His kingdom worldwide. Our work is not over when we become a biblical community—we’re a biblical community so that we can accurately reflect Him to the world.

THE PLAN OF THE CROSSROADS COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS
(How We’re Doing It)

“Our plan is through exaltation, evangelism, and edification we fulfill the Mission of reaching the lost and the Vision of being a biblically functioning community.”

FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF CROSSROADS, we’ve used a three-fold outline to describe God’s design for His Church. To the extent we engage in these activities, we fulfill God’s purposes in our midst.

- *Exaltation* —Corporate and private worship of God our King.
- *Evangelism* —Bringing lost people to meet our King.
- *Edification* —Building up the relationship we have with our King.

EXALTATION: *We believe that God is worthy to be praised, and therefore, God's people ought to praise Him.*

This includes public gathering where we praise God through a variety of culturally relevant, yet doctrinally pure, expressing of praise. Primarily through weekend services we sing, pray, receive instruction from God's Word and bring our offerings of service and financial support and offer them to God. (Psalm 150; Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2)

It also includes private practice as we live our lives as *Ambassadors of Christ* and a *light to the world* so that others may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:20)

EVANGELISM: *We believe that lost people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church.*

This includes the concepts of relational evangelism and evangelism as a process, as well as evangelism through missionary outreaches both at home and abroad. (Luke 5:30-32; Luke 15; Matthew 18:14)

EDIFICATION: *We believe that the pursuit of full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer who therefore should manifest authenticity and yearn for continuous growth.*

This includes the development of personal character and wholeness (Ephesians 4:25,26,32; Hebrews 12:1, Philippians 1:6), the discovery and use of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12 and 14; Romans 12; Ephesians 4; Psalm 133:1), and the concepts of stewardship, servanthood, downward mobility and the pursuit of Kingdom goals (1 Kings 11:4; Philippians 2:1-11; 2 Corinthians 8 and 9).

A STRATEGY FOR BUILDING THE CHURCH

A STRATEGY FOR BUILDING THE CHURCH is simply a way of working the plan. Jesus once explained by means of an analogy an important aspect of how His church was going to develop. He said new wine should be put in new wineskins instead of trying to reuse old ones. Through this metaphor, He taught about the distinction between the eternal, unchanging aspects of His work (that is, the wine) and the outward packaging of that activity (the wineskins). We are not free to re-prioritize the work of God, but His work *can* be done in a variety of ways through a variety of means supported by a variety of structures.

The Spirit who worked in the Old Covenant times is the same Spirit who is working in the New. But He's doing fresh things in fresh ways, and the old "wineskins" of the past must give way to new ones. Grounded in the eternal Word of God, ministry must be adapted to be relevant to the hearers. Jesus' unchanging Gospel must go forward in the language familiar to the people we're trying to reach. That includes familiar elements of culture. It would be as foolish to speak English to a French audience as it would be to try to use outdated methods to reach lost "moderns."

Part of the love we express to the lost is to adapt our message to their ears, to "become all things to all men, that (we) may by all means save some" as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 9:22. This adaptation is not an adaptation of content, but of form. True followers of Jesus remain true to His message, but they find ways to convey it so their hearers respond to the content rather than the packaging. Even if they reject the message, we can be confident they've made their decision about the genuine article, not a misunderstood caricature. No one method will ever work in every culture, and even within the same society a variety of ministry approaches will be necessary for every person to hear God's Word so they understand.

We recognize that in today's society non-believers are not flocking to churches. Current trends tell us that most church growth today is the result of

transfer growth instead of conversion growth. This means that few non-believers are finding their way into local churches. Our message is the 2000 year old Gospel of Jesus. We will not alter our Savior's message. We stand firmly in the historic Christian faith "once for all delivered" to the church (Jude 3). The teaching transmitted by Jesus through His apostles contained in the Bible governs our individual beliefs and conduct. It is our full and final authority. But our strategy to reach the lost must change if we are going to reach the lost. It is the strategy that gives us a mechanism for working our plan.

Steps From Sinner To Saint

THERE ARE MANY APPROACHES a church can use to reach the lost. We certainly want to use a variety of methods to present the wonderful message of God's grace. The steps must be supported by biblical principles and depend heavily upon the work of God's Holy Spirit to do the work of drawing a person to the Savior. The following steps maximize our efforts in reaching the lost primarily through supporting the individual evangelistic ministry of our church members. And they go beyond reaching a person with the message of Christ. They guide the believer to maturity in Christ. They are, in short, a track that when followed will develop fully devoted followers of Christ.

Following are the steps with brief explanations:

1. Build a Relationship

THE FIRST STEP IS TO REACH out to the non-believer personally. Rather than beginning with the message of Christ, we seek to make connections so that when we do share the message, we have credibility. People are more inclined to consider a radical message from a trusted friend than from a stranger. The love and interest we show cultivates the ground in preparation for sowing the seeds of the Gospel.

2. Share a Verbal Witness

A WITNESS IN A COURTROOM simply describes accurately what he or she saw. That's how we want to witness to un-churched friends. We describe the life we knew, the Savior who came to us and the changes He's made. It is not enough just to be "nice people"—unbelievers must hear why we are the way we are, who can save them and how.

3. Invite to a Weekend Service

EVERY WEEKEND we use the services at the church to present some facet of the message of Christ. We want to care enough about the non-believer to invite them to attend these services and hear about the love of God for them.

The non-believer, of course, is not “already convinced” and must be nurtured by the individual member. The individual member should arrange to meet the seeker at the door and sit with them during the service. Non-believers generally have many questions about why people respond to God openly. We know that believers respond to God openly because they have a personal relationship with God. They are part of God’s family. But the non-believer does not and is not. He or she does not find joy in singing praises to a God they do not know. In fact, many non-believers view God as unapproachable. With the careful guidance of the believer the seeker can be made comfortable and have opportunity to ask questions about the way believers worship God. It can be helpful to meet the seeker after the service or at a later time and discuss the questions and concerns the non-believer has. This kind of personal attention will serve the non-believer by helping them understand the *peculiarities* of the believers meeting. The individual member can further the process by making an appointment to meet the seeker at service the next week. Experience shows that people need time to process information. When that process is honored, the commitments made take root better than poorly informed impulse decisions.

4. Become a Regular Attendee of Crossroads

AT SOME POINT, the non-believer accepts Christ as their Forgiver and Leader. When they do, generally the next step is to begin attending services regularly. Through in-depth Bible teaching they gain a better grasp of God’s Word. They also begin to experience worship through song, prayer, and Holy Communion.

5. Participate in a Small Group

TRUE LIFE CHANGE HAPPENS BEST in the context where you can be known authentically and where you share your spiritual journey with others. A small group is often one of the best places to do that. Four to ten believers gather at least two times a month to share their lives, learn from God’s Word in a discussion format, and serve one another. Groups also can grow in service to the Body at large, either by being a serving group or through periodic short-term service.

6. Serve in the Body of Christ

EVERY BELIEVER is given a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit, and that gift is to be used for the common good. Whether in a small group or on a serving team, every Participating Member knows he or she is truly part of the church when his or her spiritual gifts are being used to further God's work in the church and beyond.

7. Steward Financial Resources

WHEN GOD BECOMES MASTER of our spending and giving habits, we can be confident He is master over one of the most personal areas of our lives. All our resources are entrusted to us to use for Kingdom purposes as well as for meeting personal needs. The last step is to allow God to have freedom in this area of our lives. That way, what we keep as well as what we give (using the historic biblical benchmark of 10% of our income as a starting reference) honors Him in every respect.

HOW IS CROSSROADS GOVERNED?

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ—from whom the whole Body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the Body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

THE HEAD OF CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL is Jesus Christ. As an organization, we seek to reflect His priorities in all we do and how we do it. No decision is ever made that would knowingly contradict any of Jesus' teaching. In addition, through the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we endeavor to discern God's program for us as a church. Whenever we implement a plan, we keep one eye on our effectiveness, and the other on the next step God seems to be showing us.

Multifaceted Leadership

ON A HUMAN LEVEL, three groups of people direct the ministries of Crossroads Community Cathedral. These bodies are the Church Board, the Executive Committee and the Staff.

The Official Church Board

ALL MATTERS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT are carried on by the Official Church Board except in matters pertaining to the disposition of church real property (as identified in Article XI of the Constitution), the purchase and sale of real estate, the construction of new buildings, and the institution of a Christian school. In such cases, the Official Board presents their recommendations to the church for ratification by majority vote. The Official Church Board consists of the Senior Pastor, its chairman; along with Elders, Deacons, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

The elders are those who assist the Pastor in providing general watch care and oversight to the assembly. Elders are members of the Body, men of mature Christian experience and knowledge who are trained in the administration of spiritual matters. They use their wisdom, discernment, and shepherding gifts to ensure the church remains on a true course biblically.

Deacons are chosen from the Body to serve the church and act in an advisory capacity with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the administrative affairs of the assembly. Among their responsibilities are the examination of applicants for membership and the administration of discipline.

The Secretary is the keeper of Official Church Records and Minutes. The Treasurer is responsible for the accounting and reporting of all financial matters of the church.

The Executive Committee

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE is an administrative committee set up by the Senior Pastor. It is made up of key staff members with the Senior Pastor being the chairman. This administrative committee functions under the direct guidance of the Senior Pastor coordinating the entire operation of Crossroads and its ministry departments. Other responsibilities include long-range planning, regular meetings with department heads, attendance at Official Church Board meetings as resource people, and serving as ex-officio board members of all boards and departments under their individual supervision. The executive committee's main function is to give leadership to the staff and church.

The Staff

STAFF MEMBERS DIRECT the day-to-day affairs of the sub-ministries of the church. They are paid so that they can devote the best hours of their day to building ministries. The staff supports the strategies and priorities determined by the executive committee management team. The staff's main job is to build and coordinate teams of volunteers so that ministry can happen.

Serving In Unity

THE WAY THE THREE GROUPS WORK TOGETHER can best be stated as follows: the staff directs the ministries of the church with overall leadership provided by the executive committee; these ministries are supported by the policies and financial resource allocation determined by the Official Church Board. (For a more detailed description of how these groups are selected and function, see Appendix F, "Crossroads Community Cathedral Constitution & Bylaws.")

The government of Crossroads has historically worked smoothly because of the humble, servant-like spirit of these groups of people. Leaders at all levels do not see it as their role to "lord it over" those in their charge, but desire to serve the Body with their gifts and to build the Kingdom rather than an "empire." Members of the church sense this servanthood in action and likewise esteem those in leadership. Whether as a leader or a follower, everyone in the church is submitted to Jesus Christ, and we all consider others as more important than ourselves (Phil. 2:3). This spirit of cooperation and appreciation is one of the remarkable features of the ministry of Crossroads and is one of God's greatest blessings to our Body. It is a fragile gift, however, and any person desiring to become a Participating Member should value and protect it.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 9)

THE CROSSROADS STATEMENT OF FAITH summarizes our beliefs as a church. Our theology is not innovative—it comes right off the pages of Holy Scripture. Anyone familiar with historic Christian doctrine will find that these statements fall in the center of biblical teaching. They are not speculative nor do they represent theology rooted in tradition. They are Protestant and evangelical in that they are centered in *Salvation by faith in the work of the risen Christ*. They are Pentecostal in that they encourage *Holy Spirit empowered living* to be the privilege of every believer. We try not to be dogmatic about matters on which Bible-based believers have held divergent views. We want our core beliefs to be centered in Christ and His message as found in and supported by the clearest passages of Scripture. More obscure doctrine or teachings with less support are left to individuals to sort out on their own—we take no official position in these areas. A complete *Tenets of Faith* can be found in *Appendix F* of this manual. What follows is an edited representation of those biblical-based beliefs.

Words to Live By

AS YOU READ THESE STATEMENTS, you will see they are rich with spiritual truth. The statements and the explanatory comments are there to clarify and help apply vital biblical doctrines. Do not try to hurry through these pages, but read them slowly and thoughtfully. Ask yourself throughout, “What difference does this truth make in my life? If I didn’t know or believe this, would it matter?”

The Bible

THE SOLE BASIS OF OUR BELIEF IS THE BIBLE, composed of 66 books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that Scripture in its entirety originated with God and that it was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus at one and the same time speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

COMMENTS: Human reason is a powerful tool, but it is distorted by our finite and often self-centered perspective. Reason alone cannot figure out the meaning to life, and cannot comprehend who God is beyond the simple awareness that He exists. We cannot get through our limitations to reach Him and have a relationship with Him. He will have to break through and get to us. The Bible is the written summary of His attempts to do that.

But the Bible isn't just a record of His words, it itself is the Word of God in written form. It is revelation—truth expressed not by means of humans groping in the dark for the right way to say it, but truth given by God Himself as He “carried people along” in their writing. Their message was and is His message. Because God cannot lie, this written Word is completely reliable, so we must let it judge us instead of us judge it. Though other books, both modern and ancient, may contain helpful spiritual truth, no other writings are “God-breathed” in the way the Bible is—truth is mixed with error everywhere except in the Bible. That is why we base our beliefs on its teaching and submit all our thoughts and plans to its scrutiny.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *We endeavor to regularly read and study the Bible, privately and publicly, to understand its message.*
- *We reject claims that any human or ecclesiastical intermediary is necessary for us to know and relate to God—we have His Word, and we are each individually responsible to learn what it says.*

- *All aspects of our life and conduct must be submitted to what the Bible teaches about that area—we must obey what we discover God has commanded.*
- *Messages given by Crossroads Community teachers must provide teaching supported by Scripture.*
- *We do not accept doctrines, no matter what is claimed as their source, if they do not square with what the Bible says; supposed “modern prophets”, “new revelation”, or any message—even if apparently given miraculously—must be tested by the Bible.*

God

WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONE TRUE, HOLY GOD, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—each of Whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created out of nothing the world and all the things therein, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom, and goodness. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

COMMENTS: The Bible begins with the phrase, “In the beginning, God...” God has always existed—His nature and being are eternal. We also learn about God from His revelation to us that three distinct “persons” are called God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Because the Bible clearly teaches there is only one God (not three Gods), we understand that these three persons must fully share the one and only divine nature. We use the term “Trinity” as a label for the teaching that God has a singular nature but a plural personality.

This creative God desired to share the “community” that always existed within Him, so He made a universe that would reflect His attributes. All that He created is dependent on Him—He made it out of nothing, keeps it together, can reshape it, and is Master over it. God crowned His creation with man and woman, fashioned in His personal image, with whom He could have a relationship, and who could relate to each other. They would reflect His nature by exhibiting unity in the presence of diversity, love in the midst of differences, ruling while remaining submissive all at the same time.

God has been involved in the affairs of His creation from the very beginning, and continues to play an active role in relating to mankind, specifically in rescuing us from our rejection of His love and His legitimate right to be glorified as our Creator.

Galatians 2:16

Describe briefly the time in your life when you gave up trying to obtain God's favor through any accomplishment of your own and rested in the work of Christ on the cross for you. If you have not done that yet, or aren't sure if you have, note that below.

What does the Bible reveal concerning God's behind-the-scenes work in preparation for welcoming us into His family of grace?

John 6:37, 44, 65

Ephesians 1:3-6

As you think about it, what does His preparation mean to you personally?

The Outward Sign of Grace Received

What was the response of new believers—those who had recently received grace—that visibly demonstrated what God had done in their lives according to the following verses?

Acts 2:37-38,41

Acts 8:36-38

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *Knowing God is our highest priority^{3/4}substituting any activity or allowing any passion to become stronger is idolatry.*
- *We cannot agree with any teacher or religious group which rejects God's revelation of Himself as Trinity (as is common among most "cult" groups).*
- *We can count on God to be active throughout our lifetime; He will bring us good things, and He will turn evil things into some good; He works in our lives so we develop a vital relationship with Him based on deep trust that supersedes all other loyalties.*
- *We treat creation as something wonderful that God has made; we neither abuse it, nor worship it; we seek to cultivate all that God has shared with us so it can be used to further His purposes, treating it as a stewardship from Him which must be preserved without becoming more important than the people He made to enjoy it.*
- *We treat human creation as the highest creation in that "God created man a living soul" and believe every person of every nation of people is a person Christ died for, matters to God, and should matter to us.*

The Fall and Salvation of Man

BY VOLUNTARY TRANSGRESSION man fell and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God. The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, man defied God, choosing to go his independent way, and thus was alienated from God and suffered the corruption of his nature, rendering him unable to please God. The fall took place at the beginning of human history, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences and are thus in need of the saving grace of God.

The salvation of mankind is, then, wholly a work of God's free grace, not the result, in whole or in part of human works or goodness, and must be personally appropriated by repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is evidenced inwardly by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit.

COMMENTS: *The common myth that humankind is basically good is not supported by the Bible. We were originally created good, but the first man and woman rebuffed God's rightful place in their lives, so we are all now infected with the disease called "sin" and are spiritually separated from God. There is no human effort that can remedy this condition. If God had left us to ourselves, all of us would continue in disobedience and rejection of Him.*

The good news is that He has provided a way out of our dilemma through the death of Jesus Christ, which paid the penalty for our sins. Those who personally appropriate the forgiveness that God offers will be restored to a right relationship with Him. This new life is a gift; it cannot be earned by our activities.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *Our message to seekers contains the call to turn from fruitless attempts to earn God's favor and to cast themselves without reservation on the perfect and reliable provision of God in Christ.*
- *We live secure in the knowledge that the Christian life we believe is a "thank you" to God for the salvation He has fully and completely provided.*
- *We neither think our obedience "enhances" His provision for us nor treat His grace in a cavalier way as an excuse to live sinfully.*
- *We understand that according to Romans 8:38,39 there is nothing that shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord and we are sobered by the fact that the one thing missing from that list is sin.*

Jesus Christ

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY, the Son of God who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died.

He ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

COMMENTS: Jesus is “the God-Man” who is unlike any person who has or ever will live. He is not part divine, part human—He is fully both; all of God dwelt in Him and His humanity was complete. His birth evidences His humanity in that He was born in the normal way from a human mother, yet His divinity is established by virtue of the fact His mother was a virgin who conceived miraculously. In His humanity, He experienced every human limitation except sin; He was like us in every way except that He never disobeyed His heavenly Father. In His divinity, He was coequal with His Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity. His death did not end His existence, but after He had paid for our sin on the cross, He arose from the dead on the third day. His resurrection not only shows His complete provision for sin’s effects; it also serves as a prototype of our future resurrection when our bodies will be remade in the same way to live in eternity. Jesus continues to possess both full humanity (though glorified) and full divinity. He is our ongoing mediator between us and the Father, ever mindful of our needs, always concerned for our well-being. His final words on earth included the promise to return to earth visibly and bodily for the purpose of consummating history.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *We are Christian because we are followers of Christ, not because we are born in a religious family.*
- *Because our salvation was secured by a perfect sacrifice of a perfect person, we live knowing that we are totally and unconditionally forgiven from sin now, rather than hoping we will be forgiven at some future point.*
- *We are secure in the grace of God through Jesus Christ.*
- *Knowing that Jesus will return some day, we hold on loosely to the things of this world, counting on the new heavens and earth to be our permanent home.*

The Christian Life

THE ESSENTIAL ACCOMPANIMENT of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. This action, called *sanctification*, results in separation from that which is evil and dedication unto God. The Holy Spirit works even from the beginning of salvation. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them. At the point of salvation He indwells every believer and becomes the source of assurance, strength and wisdom. He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the up-building of the Body. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture which produces *fruits* of the Spirit—Christ-like character that brings glory to the Father.

COMMENTS: *Every believer wants to please the Lord who so graciously saved him or her from sin. We please God as we strive to be more like Him. As the Holy Spirit makes us aware of things we do that don't please God we turn from them and turn toward God. Thus, our lives are lives of repentance. By turning toward God and His Word we are following the leading of the Holy Spirit. As we follow the Holy Spirit the "fruit" or character of the Holy Spirit begins to be evident in our life; producing in us the kind of character that makes us credible, persuasive representatives of Jesus Christ.*

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *As saved people, we are continually striving to be more like the One who saved us; we are not content just to be forgiven; we want to exemplify Christ-like behavior in every area of life—we will never give up the fight to resist sin and be like Him in word and deed.*
- *The Christian life is more than just "being good—we need the Holy Spirit to bear His fruit in us; therefore, our daily lives must be yielded to the Spirit in a moment-by-moment surrender or our self-improvement efforts will be useless.*
- *When we share Christ with others, the message we present is effectual not because of our superior reasoning or irresistible presentation, but because of the Spirit being free to work through us and in the heart of the person we're talking to; therefore, we depend ultimately on His invisible activity through our limited understanding of what will reach the person.*

- *Because the Spirit is resident in us, we will listen for His promptings, anticipating He wants to direct us and will do so if we are open to Him.*

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

THE HOLY SPIRIT holds a special meaning for Pentecostals. By the work of the Holy Spirit we are placed into the Church which is the Body of Christ. We believe that Jesus wants to baptize all believers with Holy Spirit power that will help them in their witness in the world. This experience is the work of Jesus and with it comes such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit, an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work, and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost. This is referred to as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4).

COMMENTS: This Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the uniquely distinctive doctrine of Pentecostals worldwide. Most every Christian recognizes the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals emphasize the “empowering” work of Jesus. Jesus is the baptizer and His baptism fully equips the believer to do His work. To be “baptized” in the Holy Spirit is to follow the command of Jesus to be “endued with power from on high.” Because it is administered by Jesus, there is little the believer can do to obtain it but to ask. Because it is an “endowment” of power promised by the Savior (Acts 1:8), every believer should earnestly seek the Baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *The last command of the Savior was for His followers to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. As we seek this we are being faithful to His command.*
- *The Holy Spirit is God, not just a force. He works “behind the scenes” to prepare people to hear the Gospel and then empowers us for witness.*
- *We become that witness as we live a life representative of the character of God; as we use the gifts He gives us to serve others in the church; and as we cooperate with His “leadings” in reaching out to others.*

Divine Healing

WE BELIEVE THAT GOD CHOOSES TO bless His people with many blessings, included in them is the privilege of going to Him for all sorts of healing needs. Divine healing is an integral part of the Gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers.

COMMENTS: God, in the Old Testament, identifies Himself as “the God that heals.” We understand this healing to include all sorts of physical, spiritual, and emotional healing. While the greatest healing is the healing of the sin-sick soul, we understand that Jesus healed people of their physical problems in direct reference to the Old Testament predictions of healing being provided for through the work of the suffering Savior. Further, we understand that this healing power is from God, rather than from man. While man must have faith in order to receive anything from God, no level of faith that a man has will ever insure healing. It is Divine healing rather than “Faith” healing as practiced by some today. The biblical process is given to us in Scripture and that is for the believer to (1) Call on the elders and ask for prayer, (2) proper confession of sins, (3) anointing with oil, and (4) believing prayer. Our belief in Divine healing in no way takes away from the sovereignty of God nor the need of medical doctors but gives us an opportunity to bring our personal needs to the throne of God with the assurance that God hears our prayer.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *As believers we can face all sorts of illness with the confidence that God cares and openly invites us to bring our problems to Him and ask for His help.*
- *We are not limited to the wisdom of man, but can find hope even when modern medicine leaves no room for hope.*
- *Because God has invited us to approach Him in prayer, we can expect Him to intervene on our behalf and on the behalf of our family needs.*
- *We can rejoice even in death because we look forward to an eternal life with no sickness, pain or dying.*

Human Destiny

DEATH SEALS THE ETERNAL DESTINY of each person. For all of mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. Unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. God's judgment will reveal His justice in consigning them to eternal retribution for their own rejection of God. Believers will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in this life.

COMMENTS: There are no "second chances" after we die. Our relationship to God for eternity is set by how we respond to Him in this life. God has not only saved our souls, but (as He did for Jesus) God is going to resurrect our bodies in a form that will be suited to the environment of the eternal life we will inherit. The only hope for spending eternity with God will be to claim the merits of Christ. Any attempt to hold out one's good deeds as sufficient for God's approval will discover that those behaviors weren't enough, and that one's misconduct was far more serious than anticipated (now that it's brought into the searing light of a holy God). Because we are made in God's image and have the mark of His handiwork on us, He does not destroy us after we die. He is the God of the living, "for all live to Him," said Jesus. Rather, He fixes our eternal condition based on our life preferences: heaven and hell are simply the fulfillment of our spiritual aspirations as manifested in life. If we welcomed His presence and cooperated with Him in our earthly life, He is pleased to continue that relationship for all eternity. If, on the other hand, we looked for ways to avoid Him and sought to live in behavior He condemned, He will allow us to continue unbothered by His presence and commands forever. Hell is God's provision for those who have longed for Him to stop interfering with their plans and who wish He would leave them alone. There, they will be "protected from God" forever, while those in heaven, whose highest delight in life was God, will be able to enjoy forever the One who gave them pleasure on earth.

Some PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *We reject the teaching of reincarnation—we must make good choices with the one life we have and urge others not to count on some later incarnation to work out their problems.*
- *Knowing that our eternity is infinitely longer and more significant than our 70 or so years on earth, we order our lives here so that they take into account this eternal perspective; we choose our activities and priorities based on God’s pleasure, recognizing that His approval supersedes every other consideration.*
- *Though we know good works can’t earn heaven, we are taught that our obedience pleases God and will be rewarded; we serve Him diligently, not only because it brings Him glory, but because He has assured us the future age will make all earthly difficulties fade by comparison.*
- *The message of the Gospel brings life to those who would perish eternally without Christ; we therefore seek to present His saving message publicly and privately as often as we can (being sensitive to our listeners’ needs as well as communicating naturally through our own evangelistic “style”).*
- *As we relate to people throughout life, we see them as the “eternal beings” that they are and accord them due respect; we have never related to an “average” person—everyone matters to God and deserves to be treated lovingly.*

The Church

THE RESULT OF UNION with Jesus Christ is that all believers become members of His Body, the Church. There is one true Church universal, comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scripture commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, the teaching of the Word, the observance of Baptism and Communion (the ordinances established by Jesus Christ), fellowship, service to the Body through development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world.

Whenever God’s people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. Under the leadership of divinely called and scripturally ordained ministers, the watch-care of elders and other supportive leadership, its members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the one ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ.

COMMENTS: *The Church is first and foremost an organism, not an organization. It is the living Body of Christ, made up of all people everywhere who are His followers. It is not defined by the limits of any particular denomination but includes all true believers. The local expression of this Body is found wherever His children gather in His name. Scripture describes some of the activities of a church, but it is Christ in our midst that makes us His church, not anything we do.*

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *Non-Christians can belong to an organization, but making us members of the Church is something Christ does; our Participating Membership system recognizes this invisible work of Christ as distinct from the flexible, human-controlled membership in a local fellowship.*
- *We are a Pentecostal church, emphasizing the apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit, adds a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God, and enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries.*
- *We are a trans-racial church emphasizing that all true believers are one with Christ and each other regardless of their "Nation" of origin. We further believe that in the Church we find our highest origin and we are no longer "Jews" or "Greeks," "bond" or "free," nor male or female (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27,28), but are all now the children of God.*
- *Every gathering of believers is a gathering of the Church; every small group is in fact the Church meeting together in its smallest unit. Small group leaders function as shepherds of their "flock"; all leaders are connected to one another through the local church infrastructure and ultimately, the ministers and elders can provide watch-care, through those leaders, for the entire church.*
- *All believers must have opportunities to learn about and develop their spiritual gifts; we structure our ministry to implement this value so that everyone can participate in some aspect of the church based on their passion and giftedness.*

- *Disunity hurts the Body of Christ and His cause. We guard our unity and diligently seek to honestly confront and work through differences in God-honoring ways that both respect the individual (made in God's image) and preserve the oneness in Christ we need to manifest.*

Final Things

BELIEVERS ARE PEOPLE of time and eternity. The Scriptures tell us to live our lives in anticipation of our Lord's return. That return will be sudden and in God's own timing and will signal the ending of mortal reign on this earth. The Second Coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years. This will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace. And we further look for, according to His promise, new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

COMMENTS: As believers come to an end of their earthly life they naturally turn their thoughts toward the future. Most of the writers of Scripture were given insight into the future plans of God and from the Scriptures we understand that God has made provision for a new beginning. The ultimate end is that "all the kingdoms of this world become kingdoms of our God." Believers will join in that reign under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and will live eternally with Him in heaven.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *This life is only a preparation for the life to come. We serve ourselves and our family's well when we make Him Lord of our life today.*
- *Sacrifices in this life are sure to be rewarded in that life where we will enjoy the uninterrupted benefits of His presence and rule.*
- *Because He could come at any time we should actively "be about the Father's business" and encourage others to follow Him.*
- *Because He is coming again we will not lose hope, no matter how difficult this life is for us, knowing that the King of all creation will not forget His children.*

Tools for Growth

The Bible

What do the following verses teach about the importance of Scripture in the life of a growing Christian?

Psalm 1:2-3

Hebrews 4:12

Psalm 119:9-24

According to 2 Timothy 3:16, who is the real author of the Scriptures?

In the light of 2 Timothy 3:17, what are the different ways you are equipping yourself with the Word of God?

How would you put in your own words the warning in James 1:22-25? What specific ways are you tempted in this area?

Prayer/Solitude/Worship

What does Luke 5:16 and 6:12-13 tell us about Jesus' prayer life and His need to get alone periodically? What are the implications for you personally?

How is it possible to obey Ephesians 6:18 in our day and age?

Summation

SCRIPTURE IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY in all matter of faith and practice. This church recognizes that it cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.

We believe the Statement of Faith to be an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches. All members shall refrain from advocating doctrines that are not included in the Statement of Faith in such a way as to cause dissension.

COMMENTS: Truth is found in the Scriptures—but truth is not found ONLY in the Scriptures. The Bible is sufficient for our spiritual lives, but many other beneficial things can be learned through other means. We embrace whatever we can learn from whatever legitimate source, always passing it through the discerning grid of God’s unerring Word. What Scripture teaches, we embrace. Beyond that, no person, organization, or writings have authority to dictate our beliefs. We believe that what has been said in this Statement of Faith is not teaching of our own design, but an accurate reflection of the Bible’s main themes, true for all people at all times in every place. We ask that everyone in our fellowship agree that, even if they have differing opinions, there be no divisiveness.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- *No person ever has the right to dictate the beliefs of another person; we submit to God’s authority through His Word—it stands over and judges all of us, including our leaders.*
- *We do not take stands on controversial issues about which the Bible is silent; individuals are left to their own conscience before the Lord rather than depending on the church to tell them what to think or do.*
- *We are free to express our own opinions among our brothers and sisters, but we don’t want to ever harm the church by gathering a following around ourselves (or an interpretation of a controversial issue) to create a splinter-group.*
- *We value the well-being of Christ’s Body above our desire for self-expression; though no authority has a right to police our thoughts, we agree not to speak with unwarranted conviction when our opinions pertain to non-biblical matters or when our views differ from this Statement of Faith.*

SECTION 3

**CHARACTERISTICS OF
PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

THE FIVE G'S



INTRODUCTION TO THE FIVE G'S

A FARMER HAS NO POWER TO MAKE his crop grow. He prepares the field, sows the seed, fertilizes soil, and protects the plants from parasites. But he cannot create life. Yet, every good farmer cultivates his crop because he knows he must do the RIGHT things even if he can't do the most important thing. Most of all, he pays attention to the health of his field. He analyzes it constantly, observing the important indicators of life: seedlings that break through the soil, green color which denotes health, and changes that show growth. If those things are absent, he works to reverse the detrimental effects of whatever threatens his crop. He takes all of this action, yet remains utterly dependent on something other than what he can do to make his crop successful. Such is the life of a farmer.

And such is the life of the church! The apostle Paul said, "You are God's field" (1 Corinthians 3:9). We are completely dependent on God, yet we must look for the signs of life and combat the presence of what threatens our spiritual health both individually and collectively. We must look for the characteristics of a healthy church, and see if we have them. We must note the symptoms of spiritual blight, and fend it off. We do this with the humble admission that God is in our midst, providing life and growth. We are caretakers, not creators.

What are the signs of spiritual life and health? Specifically, how can we look at our church as a whole and know that "These signs indicate we are doing well" or "This situation is a problem and we must work for change"? We need a diagnostic tool.

The Five G's are an attempt to draw, in broad strokes, the picture of a healthy church. If we have Participating Members living out these characteristics, we're doing OK. If people aren't progressing along these lines, something has to change.

As you delve into this study, realize it is intended to be a tool, not just for our church, but for YOU. How often do you take a look—a deep look—at your current spiritual life and discuss your findings with someone committed to helping you, whose whole reason for meeting with you is to offer a supportive perspective on where you are and where you're going? That opportunity is just around the corner after you complete this study.

(Note: The amount of time required to complete this study will vary from person to person, depending on the amount of reflecting you do while writing your responses. On the average, it takes about 10 hours for all five sections. To maximize the personal benefit, consider completing the study in stages, perhaps using it as a devotional aide during the days you're working on it.)

Grace

The Foundation Of Our Life With God



CORE VALUE: *We believe that lost people matter to God and therefore ought to matter to God's people .*

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” (John 3:16)

BEGINNINGS. We've all had them at various points in our lives. If you can't remember any of your own, other people may be willing to share theirs. You could ask a six-year-old girl about her first day of school. Or follow around a young man on his first day at the new job. Or share in the joy as a newlywed couple giggle out their excitement as “I now pronounce you...” gets pronounced. They'll all tell you that beginnings are a great time of life (albeit a little scary).

But beginners often overlook crucial factors that made their beginning possible. They may forget that their beginning required numerous steps leading up to it. The first-grader isn't dwelling on how mom went shopping for supplies and new clothes, and spent hours trying to help the little lady be ready for what she'd find that first day. The new job was prepared for by years of intense study and an investment of thousands of dollars. And the newlyweds fell in love quite a long time ago, even though today they officially begin life together.

God's grace enables us to make a very important beginning spiritually. It's by grace—the word means “a favor we didn't earn”—that we start the Christian life. But God's grace involves more because He did a lot of work behind the scenes long before we responded. He literally came to our planet in the person of Jesus Christ, and by means of the death of Christ on the cross, He paid our crippling sin debt. He comes to each of us now, pursuing us even in our waywardness and points us in a new direction. His grace also has staying power. He persistently takes us the next step of our spiritual journey. He never gets tired of working with us, and He is **PATIENT AND LONG-SUFFERING** toward us. That's grace.

Grace may be a somewhat unfamiliar term to you, or like so many, you hear it sprinkled in “spiritual” conversations but aren’t exactly sure how to define it. You also may come from a spiritual tradition where the term had a different usage than what is found in the Bible. So we all need to understand what grace means—from the Bible—and then solidify our understanding of our own beginning with God. For some of us, this very study will be the doorway into that first experience of grace that enables us to say, “I finally understand what grace is, and I’m sure I’m a recipient of it.” For others of us, we will be able to affirm again, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.”

Our Need for Grace

Some people assume that they are not that much worse than anyone else, so they don’t need any special help from God. How would you put in your own words the message of the following verses to those who think themselves morally “acceptable”?

Romans 3:10-18, 23

Galatians 3:22

(See also Isaiah 59:2 and 64:6)

Sometimes, we can be too proud to make such an admission of moral failure. How would you describe the relief God stands ready to offer so that we do not have to shy away from being utterly honest admitting our sinful condition?

Matthew 11:28-30

Isaiah 1:18

1 John 1:8-9

Romans 8:1

Sometimes, we're afraid to admit our sinfulness because to do so feels so hopeless. Many of us react to that sense of despair and decide to become "religious"—we try to change our behaviors so we feel—and appear—better. After reading carefully Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7, write a letter to yourself explaining why you can't and don't have to earn God's acceptance.

Dear _____,

To forgive someone literally means to release that person from an indebtedness. But if you forgive a debt, the money must then come from somewhere else—usually you, the debt-forgiver. In the spiritual realm, God's forgiveness means we're released from spiritual debt. But our sins don't just vanish into thin air. What is the mechanism for covering our spiritual debt according to these verses?

1 Peter 2:24

Hebrews 10:10-14

GRACE

Now consider your own life. Why would you agree that you need God's grace in order to have a relationship with Him?

Our Response to God

Once we're at that position where we've been honest about our need for God's help and forgiveness, what does the Bible say is the next step?

John 1:11-12

Acts 16:30-31

Romans 10:9

Acts 16:14-15

According to Romans 6:4-5, what does baptism signify?

Many people—maybe you too—were baptized as a child. But the pattern in the New Testament (example: Acts 18:8) is “believe—then be baptized.” Why do you think it would be appropriate for a person to be baptized AFTER his or her conversion instead of before it?

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT ON “GRACE”

Christ-followers understand and have individually received Christ’s saving grace. They have abandoned all attempts to earn God’s favor through accomplishments of their own and find security only through Christ’s sacrificial death on their behalf.

In obedience to Christ’s command, they have undergone water baptism as believers, giving outward witness to the inner cleansing and renewal experienced in Him.



Growth

Progressing As A Christian



CORE VALUE: *We believe that the pursuit of full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer.*

"Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water? While it is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other plant. So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish," (Job 8:11-13)

ALL LIVING THINGS are programmed by their DNA to go through stages of growth until they eventually reach maturity. To be alive, by God's design, is to change and to grow.

Why then do some Christians not grow spiritually? We would rush a child to the hospital if she failed to grow. How can we take similar steps to protect our own inner health when we stagnate and stop "gaining weight," spiritually speaking?

The first "G," *Grace*, emphasized our beginning the Christian life—our first encounter with God's grace. The second "G," *Growth*, is about our ongoing response to God's grace over a lifetime. Our walk with God begins by grace, and it also continues by grace. Unfortunately, just as people misunderstand the extent of God's work to initiate our Christian life, they fall into the trap of thinking their work—their following the rules—automatically produces spiritual maturity. To try to grow through one's own efforts alone is as much out of harmony with God's plan as not growing at all. Both lead to spiritual frustration.

The purpose of this study is to discover a balance between owning the responsibility to grow—which requires resisting what keeps us from growing—and trusting in the help and power of the Holy Spirit to bring about Christ-like character in us. That tension will be with us all of our lives. But if we'll commit to move forward, we will experience the blessings of God's grace active in our every day lives—and marvel at the resultant miracle of spiritual growth.

Pursuing Growth

In Colossians 2:6-7, Paul uses several different words or phrases to describe the quality of faith the people had. List below as many terms as you can find from those verses.

In Ephesians 4:14-15, Paul describes two opposites: what *shouldn't* be the case for believers, and then what *should*. List below as many of the characteristics of those opposites as you can find.

DANGERS TO AVOID...

THE PATH TO FOLLOW...

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Peter paints a similar picture in 2 Peter 3:17-18. In both passages—Paul's and Peter's—who is assigned the responsibility for spiritual growth? What are you doing now in your own life to fulfill the command of verse 18?

Practically speaking, what else could you do to further your “growth in grace”?

Paul the Apostle knew well that Jesus had saved him, yet he talks of a “striving” and a reaching for something in Philippians 3:12-14. How would you put into your own words what Paul was working so hard to do in his life?

In light of what you just wrote, what does verse 16 mean?

What is Jesus trying to say about growing as a Christian in John 15:4-5?

How do you reconcile Christ’s command to “abide” with the strong commands to “strive” in previous passages studied?

What could you do to be more obedient to that verse?

Why does David worship God in Psalm 145:1-7? How does worship benefit us, His creatures?

The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines are not ends in themselves (as the Pharisees mistakenly thought [Mark 7:3-4]). How would you describe in your own words the result of a spiritually disciplined life according to Ephesians 3:16-19?

When Growth Isn't Happening—Addressing Sin

What is the clear call of God on every believer's life and conduct in 1 John 2:4-6 and 1 Peter 1:14-16?

As long as we're forgiven, why does it make any difference whether we sin or not?

What is the one disposition of our heart that angers God even more than a particular sin according to Romans 2:5?

Combine Psalm 38, 51, and 1 John 1:9 into a unified description of how to handle sin in our lives.

Personal Growth That Leads to Kingdom Action

In the following passage, Jesus talks about His eternal purpose to construct something that will never fail. What is He going to build that will be “hell-proof”?

Matthew 16:18

Jesus’ charge to the early Christians still holds for us today. How expansive is His plan according to His words in the passages below?

Matthew 28:19-20

Acts 1:8

What implications does His plan have on your plans?

2 Corinthians 5:18 and 20 tells us we are God’s ambassadors. We usually think of evangelism as an activity we do to benefit others. How does evangelism benefit you and build up your faith when you share it with someone?

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT ON “GROWTH”

Christ-followers know the grace of God that saved them is only the beginning of His work in them. They gratefully respond by actively pursuing a life-long process of spiritual growth in Christ and seek to become conformed to His image. To this end, they consistently nurture their spiritual development through prayer, worship, and Bible study.

They regard the Bible as the final authority in all areas that it teaches about and desire to be wholly obedient to it. Christ-followers honestly confront areas of personal sin and engage the Holy Spirit’s power in seeking to turn from sin.

Christ-followers also desire to extend the grace they’ve received to others through personal evangelism and participation in the collective ministry of the church in their community, their country, and around the world.



Group

Relationships That Optimize Life-Change

! **CORE VALUE:** *We believe that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life and that life change happens best in small groups.*

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24,25)

GOD NEVER PLANNED for man to be alone. At the very beginning—in the garden—the need of another was clear. We’ve seen in the previous study that God gave us His Word, the Bible; prayer, where we can talk to Him; and His Holy Spirit to live in us and help us grow. These are valuable tools. But those tools leave us in our aloneness.

God gave us each other. Individual Christians are simply members of a Body. In the Body of Christ, we serve each other in various ways. This is just how God designed it. For example, we can learn when we listen to gifted teachers. When we worship together in church gatherings, we can enter a dimension of God’s beauty experienced through no other means. When we sit with members of our small group, someone can powerfully remind us of what we can’t see,—that God is working in us,—it is for me. When we’re together as fellow Christ followers, someone can literally say our name and encourage us with words like: “You, (*insert your name*) matter to God so much that He personalized His plan of salvation so there would be room for you.” Or we can hear, “I know you’re going through a tough time, but you’re not alone; God is with you, and we’re all with you.” These are moments of beauty that gives us the hope that we can break free from the tower of sin we have been imprisoned in for so long.

The Prince of Peace has come to rescue us from the power of sin. But He royally decrees that the people around us are His ladders of deliverance and His mirrors of accuracy. That is what “group” is all about.

The Community of Christians

The early believers in Christ did not want to live the new life they'd found alone. What do you learn about their relationships with each other from the following verses?

Acts 2:44-47

Acts 4:32-35

The writer of Hebrews actually gave a command about community life in Hebrews 10:24-25. How would you rephrase this passage in modern terms?

The Few in the Midst of Many

Jesus did not merely speak to masses of people during His ministry. What reasons can you give for His strategic decision in Luke 6:12-13?

Mark 3:14 describes the same incident, but adds the simple phrase “with Him” to the appointment of the “twelve.” What do you think is meant by that phrase, and why was it important for them to be “with Him” for that time?

In addition to large groups, where else did Christians get together according to Acts 2:46 and 1 Corinthians 16:19?

What do you suppose they got out of these smaller, house-sized group meetings that they didn’t get out of bigger gatherings?

Why would it be impossible to fulfill the following biblical commands if you were only attending weekend services and midweek services without having any close relationships?

Galatians 6:1-3

Proverbs 27:17

Colossians 3:16

At times, it appeared Jesus needed just a few by His side. What is the significance relationally of what Jesus did in Mark 14:32-35?

Concerning Jesus' actions, can you draw any parallels to your own life and needs?

Christ-like Attitudes in Every Relationship

Ephesians 5:21-6:9, Colossians 3:18-23, and Titus 2:2-10 describe several spheres, or roles, in which we are to behave in Christ-honoring ways. How many can you identify? List them below.

What would you say is the common thread through all of them,—in other words, what is Paul saying in the above list that applies to everybody?

All of us play the role of followers at some level of our Christian experience. What do the Scriptures below teach about the characteristics of a good follower in the church?

1 Corinthians 16:15-16

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Hebrews 13:17

2 Timothy 2:23-24 points out that, unfortunately, quarreling can happen among members of the church. How would you put into your own words what our attitude and response should be?

Put in your own words the procedure Jesus outlines for conflict resolution in Matthew 18:15-17.

With the passages from 2 Timothy and Matthew as a background, what are some of the common ways of handling conflict that are out of harmony with what the Bible teaches?

In which of the above ways are you sometimes tempted to respond?

What is the issue Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, Titus 3:10, James 4:1-3, and Jude 19 have in common?

Why do you think the Bible is so strong about its message not to cause divisions or factions in a church?

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT ON “GROUP”

A Christ-follower honors God’s call to participate in community in order to grow in Christ-likeness, to express and receive love, and to carry out the ministry of the church.

For this reason, Christ-followers give priority to attending the corporate gatherings of the church for the purpose of worship, teaching, and participation in the ordinance of Communion; and are connected relationally to a small group of believers for the purpose of mutual encouragement, support, and accountability.

Christ followers also:

- Pursue Christ-honoring relationships at home, within the church, and in the marketplace, and are committed to pursuing the biblical pattern of reconciliation when conflict arises.
- Support the leadership of the church and are biblically submissive to it.
- Affirm and uphold the fundamental truths of Scripture (as summarized in our Statement of Faith) and refrain from promoting other doctrines in ways that cause dissension.

Gifts

God-given Abilities Used For The Common Good



CORE VALUE: *We believe that a church should operate as a unified community of servants with men and women stewarding their spiritual gifts.*

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: ... (Romans 12:6)

CHRIST WANTS THE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY to work in harmony like the human body works in harmony with itself. A healthy church is a place where every member of the Body has an understanding of the spiritual gifts they have from God and are taking their place alongside others in using those gifts to the glory of God.

God knows we need each other. God's real plan for spiritual gifts in the church is that every believer discover their gifts and use them. God gave us different gifts, different abilities so we'd do different tasks—and need each other. He picks the gifts He gives us. When we use them we can be truly fulfilled. Like a body with differing organs, our different roles and activities bring LIFE to the church; if we become separated from each other, we suffer, like a limb out of joint within a body.

One caveat: when God gave us the gifts of the Spirit so we'd be different, He included the fruit of the Spirit so we'd all work as one. Gifts used properly always testify to our unity as well as our diversity.

The Need for and the Privilege of Serving

Read Matthew 9:36-38. Now imagine Jesus visiting a weekend service at Crossroads. After the service, you and He sit in the lobby and watch the hundreds of people walk out. He sighs as He sees the streams of attenders pass by—and then says to you the exact words from Matthew 9.

Explain in your own words what you think is on His mind and heart at that moment.

Do you personally think we have a “laborer” shortage at Crossroads today? Explain why you say that.

What was Paul’s attitude toward working to God’s service in 1 Timothy 1:12?

Obviously, scores of people at Crossroads don’t share that attitude. Why do you think that is?

What factors or attitudes have hindered your involvement at times?

Different Parts, One Body

The Bible compares the Church to a human body, with Christ as the head and all of us as different parts, or members, of the Body. Summarize in a sentence or two what Paul is trying to convey in 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

Using 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 as your guide, what is the ultimate reason we each have differing abilities within the church?

Why do you think Paul stresses the singular source behind the various spiritual activities he describes?

Romans 12:4-8 also speaks of our differing functions in the Body of Christ. What is the source of these differences?

Knowing that we're differently gifted in the Body of Christ, what do you think are some of the potential problems to be avoided?

Every Person a Difference-maker

What do you think Jesus meant by "bearing fruit" in John 15:8 and 16-17?

Why would Jesus make such a close connection between bearing fruit and showing ourselves to be His disciples?

What is the application of this truth regarding involvement in a local church?

What does 1 Corinthians 15:58 have to say about the standard for all believers of participation in ministry? How might this motivate you when you allow other things to crowd out your involvement?

List two or three areas where you can serve and make a difference.

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT ON “GIFTS”

Christ-followers recognize that the church is composed of interdependent members, each uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the Body and furthering the ministry of the church.

They therefore seek to discover, develop, and deploy those God-given gifts and seek a place of service within the church, with the support and affirmation of the Body.

Good Stewardship

The Reasonable Response To Our Gracious God



CORE VALUE: *We believe that good stewardship is a true reflection of a Godly heart.*

"And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" (Luke 16:12)

IT'S ONE OF THE FIRST WORDS a baby learns. By use of that term, a child differentiates between what is common property—what is “out there”—and what is under his or her control. Just as every child must establish “me” concretely in contrast to “you,” healthy development requires “mine” to be distinguished from “yours.” It’s not selfish for the child to talk this way, though the adamant declaration seems harsh to our adult ears. Social scientists have tried to engineer people—sometimes whole cultures—to reject this mindset. But they have all found there’s something in the human makeup that requires a separation between what has a unique relationship to me and what has the same relationship with everybody. It’s a natural and necessary phase of development to draw these boundaries, and if children don’t do so, they become pushovers and doormats and live miserable adult lives.

So what does this have to do with good stewardship? Just that we cannot call it good money management to be foolish with our resources either by hoarding or by abandoning the responsibility of ownership. We can and should say “mine” as a starting place to knowing how to handle properly what God gave us. God is the giver of all good gifts and He wants us to manage it. We need to steward it. And we do this by surveying all we have and consider in a fresh way how everything that we have—EVERYTHING—should be used in the light of eternity.

God asks us to share our “toys.” But not just to share them. He asks us to give our “toys” to Him^{3/4}all of them—and then, in His Name, keep what we need and give the rest away. He dignifies our ownership by asking—not demanding

—that we consider His ownership of us and that we reconsider how we grasp what we call our own. And so that there is no mistake about it, He gives us the ultimate example in Jesus Christ, who gave up all He had to bring a lost world home. Once there, we'll we play in His Kingdom forever, and He'll eternally share with us "toys" that defy description. There will be no more fighting there. No one will ever say "mine" again. In that place, we'll all freely embrace the reality we only begin to grasp through good stewardship on earth.
"His"

Give "Till It Hurts?"

What percentage of giving is common to the following biblical stories of giving?

Genesis 14:18-20

Leviticus 27:30,32

Malachi 3:8-10

Do you think Christians should adopt this same biblical standard for giving? Why or why not?

Stewardship of Our Resources

In Luke 14:33, Jesus lays out for His followers what percentage of our worldly goods are His, and what is ours. What is your reaction to His teaching in this verse?

What's the moral of the story Jesus summarized in Luke 16:10-13?

In the same passage, verse 12, who do you think is the owner of the property we have been given to use until the time we can become owners ourselves?

What is the implication of these verses on your own possessions?

Savings and Debt

Why is the ant a good model of proper money management according to Proverbs 6:6-11?

In the passage above, why is failure to save—being a “sluggard”—compared to having an armed man break in?

What does the writer of Proverbs say about “get rich quick” schemes in Proverbs 28:20?

In this age of easy credit and consumer debt, what does the timeless wisdom of God have to say concerning how we as His followers handle our desires and indebtedness?

Proverbs 21:25-26

Proverbs 22:26-27

Proverbs 22:7

Why do you think the Scriptures elevate practices such as saving and avoiding debt to a spiritual level rather than just a simple monetary one?

Attitudes toward Money and Giving

What additional lessons about giving can be gleaned from the following passages?

1 Timothy 6:8-10, 17-19

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

2 Corinthians 8:9,12

What attitudes should characterize giving according to 2 Corinthians 9:6-9?

What challenge is presented in this passage? What promise?

Luke 6:38

Matthew 6:3-4

In summary, mature Christians give:

GENEROUSLY...They know Christ has given all to them and they know Christ owns all they have anyway.

PROPORTIONALLY...They try to give as high a percentage of their income as possible, recognizing the tithe (10%) as a long-established benchmark which may well be exceeded as they prosper.

REGULARLY...As resources flow in, they offer the “first-fruits” back to God, honoring Him before any others.

LOCALLY...As they are able, they go beyond giving to their own church and contribute to the cause of Christ globally.

CHEERFULLY...Knowing that God sees the heart, they don’t just give begrudgingly to an organization—they give their offering as unto God Himself; they do so willingly, and not under compulsion, but with joyful worship as their resources flow out to serve others.

EXPECTANTLY...Counting on God’s promise of provision, they anticipate seeing God use their gift and know He’ll work in their own life—including financially—as they give.

A CONCLUDING STATEMENT ON “GOOD STEWARDSHIP”

Christ-followers realize that they have been bought with the price of Christ’s blood, and that everything they are and have belongs to Him.

In light of this, they desire to be responsible caretakers of the material resources that God has entrusted to them. They recognize the tithe (10% of one’s earnings) as the historic standard of giving in Scripture. But moreover, in response to Christ’s abundant giving, they increasingly submit their resources to His Lordship and display a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness in supporting the work of the church.



SECTION 4

**MEMBERSHIP AFFIRMATION
AND CONFIRMATION**



PERSONAL RESPONSE

UP UNTIL NOW IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP process, you've been primarily "taking in"—now it's time to move beyond learning and theory to make some very specific affirmations. The questions and statements that follow encapsulate the essential values, beliefs, and commitments we all hold in common as Participating Members at Crossroads Community Cathedral. The ability to affirm or not affirm these statements defines who is really a part of our church and who remains a guest or an observer. Based on your personal Bible study work on the Five G's, use this guide to make your own responses to the affirmations and beliefs of Crossroads. Bring this with you to the membership interview. Make notes as needed for further discussion with the person doing your interview. You'll note that these affirmations are organized along the same lines as the Five G study lessons.

Grace

How does someone become a Christian in the true sense of the word? Describe what happened to you.

Note: Much misunderstanding exists about what it means to “be a Christian.” Church attendance, belief in God, strong commitment, etc. are all good but none of them make you a Christian in the biblical sense. If you’re at all unclear as to whether or not you’re a Christian, we’d like to clear up any confusion you have—please don’t feel embarrassed. If you’re not sure, do not go any further on this response sheet for now. Set up a time as soon as possible to meet with your small group leader, a staff member, or an elder to discuss your uncertainties. This matter is of vital importance to every Participating Member (every person really!) so please get the input we’ve suggested before taking any more steps.

Have you been baptized in water as a believer?

Yes

No

Describe when and where.

Note: While we respect the religious heritage of those who have been baptized as infants, we believe Scripture teaches that baptism should come after a person has personally received Christ. We therefore require that a person be baptized by his or her own choice before becoming a Participating Member at Crossroads Community Cathedral (although that baptism does not need to have occurred at Crossroads). If you have not yet been baptized since you became a Christian, we ask that you do so at one of our baptism services or at some other baptism service.

Growth

Prayer, worship, and Bible study are vital elements in deepening one's walk with Christ. Describe how you are presently nurturing your spiritual growth through those spiritual disciplines on your own.

Note: In asking you to describe your spiritual habits, we want to be careful to avoid the mistaken notion that legalistic formulas and rigid rules guarantee a healthy devotional life. It is more important that your walk with Christ simply be characterized by regular and meaningful input. What matters is that you're becoming more like Him and that you've taking it upon yourself to improve your relationship with Him privately, and not solely be dependent on what public meetings provide.

Do you regard the Bible as God's final authority in all areas of the Christian life and do you desire to be wholly obedient to it?

Yes

Yes, except for...

No

Please explain any reservations you have.

Note: If you have a major concern with living under the authority of the Bible, you will probably not want to go any further with this process,—it would be out of order for anyone to be a Participating Member of Crossroads without being in submission to Scripture. It may still be valuable to meet with your interviewer to discuss your reservations, however.

In our pursuit of becoming more Christ-like, what areas are most difficult for you and most frequently need more attention?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Are there any ongoing patterns of sin in your life that you are not willing to turn from and are not yielding to Christ?

Note: This question is a very hard one to face because we are all wrestling with “something,” and none of us has reached sinless perfection. But there may come a time for some of us when we just quit trying. Either through discouragement, or maybe a hardened will, we just stop trying to grow and give up the fight. Christ’s reputation is far more likely to be marred when His followers engage in willful sin with no thought of repentance than when a sincere believer falls to temptation he or she desperately wants to overcome. Those Christ-followers with yielded hearts who honestly confront areas of personal sin with the help of the Holy Spirit please God,—what more could anyone do? If you’re not open to change, not ready to have at least one other person help and offer accountability or other support, or if you’re only at the early stages of confronting a sin-pattern, then it may be best to defer Participating Membership until time shows growth has occurred. If you have any hesitation, you should discuss this question in complete frankness with your interviewer.

Do you desire to extend Christ's saving grace to others in your circle of influence, and, as a Participating Member of the Crossroads Community, use our weekend services and other evangelistic efforts for that purpose?

- Yes
- No

If not, why not?—Or, in what ways have you actually done that recently?

Group

Consistent with God's call to commitment and community within a local church Body, do you regularly participate in the corporate gatherings of Crossroads Community Cathedral (weekend and midweek services)?

- Yes
- No

If not, is there a specific reason?

Note: We have not established a set number of services one could miss in a year before you would fail to qualify for Participating Membership. Seasons of life sometimes require extraordinary responses that preclude church attendance, as do health concerns, family problems, being out of town on business, or other unavoidable circumstances. Having said that, it is important that Participating Members value the distinctive ministries of the corporate gatherings, and that they come to church even if they don't particularly feel like it or even if the speaker for that week isn't their favorite. Mature believers come to meet God as well as each other, and He always shows up!

Do you affirm the specific mission and objectives of Crossroads Community Cathedral?

- Yes
- No

If not, what aspects are you unable to affirm and embrace?

Do you pledge your cooperation to those in leadership positions?

- Yes
- No

If not, why not?

Note: Hebrews 13:17 instructs church members to “obey your leaders, and submit to them for they keep watch over our souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.” At the same time, Scripture does not suggest blind submission,—we are all under the authority of God and His Word. Participating Members must be willing to go directly to the appropriate leader when issues of concern arise, with the desire to engage in honest and respectful dialogue. Complaints should never be taken to uninvolved members of the Body in ways that promote rumor or divisiveness.

The Crossroads Statement of Faith summarizes the basic truths of Scripture. Do you wholeheartedly affirm that statement?

- Yes
- No

If not, what are your specific reservations?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Will you refrain from promoting doctrines not found in our Statement of Faith in ways that cause dissension?

Yes

No

Are you connected to a small group of believers here at Crossroads Community for the purpose of growth, loving support, and accountability?

Yes

No

If not, please explain why.

Describe the quality of your small group life and how it is impacting your spiritual growth.

Note: It is easy to come to large group gatherings and get a false sense of our spiritual or personal condition. Furthermore, large meetings where anonymity is honored give us no opportunity to enter into someone else's needs and be God's agent of help to them. The value of "group" is that somewhere, on a regular basis with a few other believers, all Participating Members have face-to-face meetings that help shape them,—places they give and receive care. We believe that a small group is an optimal place for that to happen. But we realize that some individuals may be committed to the value of significant relationship without, for various reasons, being in a formal group at a particular time. So we give a lot of latitude as to what kind of group this might be. At a minimum it must be with other believers where you get to know them and they get to know you and Christ is central to the groups. The ideal is for two to four couples or four to eight people get together on a regular basis with one of them serving as leader and working under Crossroads Community supervision. The key, however, is to get in a group and grow to become a more mature disciple of Jesus Christ.

Do you have any relationships anywhere, such as within the church, at work, or at home, that are dishonoring to God (i.e., broken or impure relationships)?

- Yes
- No

If so, please describe the problem.

As far as it is up to you, are you committed to pursuing the biblical pattern of conflict resolution to rectify those or any future relational conflicts?

Yes

No

If not, please explain.

Note: Relational breakdowns are usually complex matters. We recognize and respect that. At the same time, Participating Members should be willing to engage in the strenuous process of conflict resolution. They should display entreatable hearts, a willingness to examine and address personal issues that may have contributed to the conflict, and an openness to receiving counsel where appropriate.

Gifts

Are you responsibly using your spiritual gifts in a place of service within the church?

Yes

No

If yes, in what area? If no, is there a specific reason? Do you intend to pursue some form of service in the near future? In what area?

Note: One of the core values of the New Testament and of Crossroads Community Cathedral is that the members of the Body are the ministers. Practically speaking, the church cannot grow in a healthy fashion unless all of its core believers are sharing the ministry load. So, we ask all Participating Members to contribute to the Body by using their gifts in some place of service. At the same time, we recognize that demanding seasons of life or other unusual circumstances may require reducing the amount of involvement or taking a “break” for a period of time. But, in any case, it should be their desire and intention to re-engage in some level of service—even if only on a periodic basis (e.g., summer substitute, banquet or fellowship assistance, help at special services).

Good Stewardship

Do you believe the way you use your material wealth is God-honoring in all respects?

- Yes
- No

PERSONAL RESPONSE

If no, in what areas? What action are you taking to make changes?

In light of the tithe as a biblical precedent for giving, do you regularly support this Body using 10% as the goal (or to surpass that as God prospers)?

- Yes
- No

If not, describe your current practice and ways you're moving toward this goal.

If proportionate giving becomes possible for you (that is, giving *beyond* 10% of your income), what dreams do you have for using your resources so the Kingdom can expand locally and around the world?

Note: People can fall prey to a variety of errors in the area of giving. One extreme is to become compelled by guilt or legalistic “obedience.” Paul said God loves a cheerful giver. Reluctant, joyless giving evidences an issue that needs to be addressed. Paul also warned against unbalanced, irresponsible giving that ignores personal needs and can actually create financial dependence (2 Corinthians 8:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; 1 Timothy 5:8). Yet, another extreme is unplanned and haphazard giving that reflects neither faithfulness nor generosity.

Crossroads position regarding giving is shaped by the Bible. The Old Testament provides the backdrop—instructing God’s people to give the first 10% of their income back to Him—and as such, it ought to move us all toward adopting at least that percentage. In response to Christ’s lavish grace, the New Testament goes on to teach proportional giving, and spurs us to doing even more to advance the Kingdom locally—and beyond—as God individually prospers and leads. On a practical level, church finances become harder. Crossroads ministries benefit thousands of people (hopefully including you!). We want to continue to offer diverse ministry opportunities, but we don’t want to burden any one person or group of people. And we certainly don’t want to resort to alternative means of generating income: bake-sales, raffles, carnivals, etc. That leaves it up to us, the “participating core” of the church to pool our resources in a committed fashion so that our own needs can be met and ministry extended to those beyond our four walls.

It is in this spirit that we ask Participating Members to support this church with their tithes. We realize for some this will be a goal to attain over time; for others, it’s already a mark they can surpass as God leads. In any case, we believe that God will bless and empower us as we joyfully band together to advance His cause.

Conclusion

We hope this opportunity to take “spiritual inventory” has been rich and affirming. Remember, we are not looking for “perfect Christians” who live struggle-free lives. We are looking for those who are committed to Christ, to His church, and to ongoing growth.

THE CONFIRMATION INTERVIEW

PEOPLE TEND TO PROCESS INFORMATION at a much deeper level when they discuss an issue rather than simply think or read about it. That's why an honest and confidential conversation about your affirmations with a leader comes after you've completed your written responses. The purpose of the confirmation interview is to affirm your commitments, accurately assess the condition of your spiritual life, and plan where you'd like to go next. This step of Participating Membership may seem a little scary because of its emphasis on vulnerability, but it is highly beneficial because it offers both clarification of what's going on and accountability to effect changes for the better. Perhaps at this stage more than any other, we stop "playing church" and get about the business of seeing ourselves in the holy light of Christ's love with the caring support of a member of His Body. This is loving, honest, Holy Spirit-infused fellowship at its best.

The person who conducts our interview is trained to facilitate your meeting. He or she takes this appointment seriously, and wants to make sure you get the maximum benefit. This leader is instructed to listen attentively, ask meaningful questions about your responses, and most importantly, support you in whatever way seems appropriate as you take this next step in your spiritual journey. As you talk, you will both decide whether you should be confirmed as a Participating Member. Typically, if you think you're ready, so will your interviewer. If you sense there are problems, the interviewer is there to help. In some rare cases, the interviewer may want to "press the pause button" and wait on your Participating Membership until some issue is addressed. It is important for you to know that your interviewer cannot stop your membership process without involving a staff member or elder. If a problem does arise—especially if the two of you disagree about anything you've discussed related to whether or not you should be confirmed—a staff member or elder must be called in for a follow-up meeting. Again, the whole purpose is to address issues and move forward—not shame you or hold you back in your spiritual progress.

To set up an interview, simply talk to your small group leader about who is qualified to interview in your division. If you don't have a small group leader, call the church office and ask for help. We'll have a leader get in touch with you. Set up a time for the interview—allow for an hour to an hour-and-a-half—and bring the following to your interview:

- This notebook with the “Five G” study filled out (pages 47-92), and note any questions you'd like to discuss.
- This notebook with the “Personal Response” pages (95-108) filled out and note any questions or qualifications you'd like to discuss.
- The “Participating Member Confirmation Form” filled out (see next page).

The interview may be conducted wherever the two of you decide. A noisy, public place would not be suitable; choose a location where quiet, meaningful conversation can take place uninterrupted.

At the conclusion of your interview, one of two things will happen. Your interviewer will either confirm you and sign your new member confirmation, or else you will agree to another meeting with a staff member or elder to discuss whatever issue is of concern. Realize that both of these steps are moves forward. They both have your spiritual well-being as top priority. They both result in personal growth and progress. They both carry the assurance that God's plan for you is unfolding right on schedule: “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:6). If you decide to call another meeting, that will be your next step. If you are confirmed, you'll need to mail or drop off your Participating Member Confirmation Form at the church office. You'll be notified when the next new Participating Membership celebration will take place so you can plan to attend with your small group.

PARTICIPATING MEMBER CONFIRMATION FORM

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT: I hereby affirm that I have completed the personal study materials and filled out the Personal Response and Affirmations. I commit myself to the vision and values of Crossroads Community Cathedral, specifically, to live in grace, grow as a believer, share in group life, serve with my gifts, and be a good steward. I now desire to be confirmed as a Participating Member. I also authorize the church to store and use the information I've provided below.

Signature _____ Date _____

I, _____, after interviewing the above applicant do hereby confirm him/her as a Participating Member of Crossroads Community Cathedral and confer all the rights and responsibilities that come with full membership in the local church.

Signature of Confirmer _____ Role/Relationship To Applicant _____ Date _____

Please print all information below

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

SALUTATION _____ NICKNAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH ___/___/___

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ST ___ ZIP _____

OCCUPATION _____

PHONE: HOME _____ WORK _____ OTHER _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ PHOTO IS ATTACHED

SEX: MALE FEMALE BAPTIZED? YES NO DATE ___/___/___

MARITAL STATUS: SINGLE MARRIED DIVORCED WIDOWED

I NOW SERVE IN THE FOLLOWING MINISTRY AREAS:

1) _____ 2) _____

MY SPIRITUAL GIFT(S) IS (ARE):

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

SPOUSE'S NAME _____ IS SPOUSE A MEMBER? YES NO

PLEASE LIST CHILDREN'S NAMES AND DATES OF BIRTH:

_____/_____/_____
 _____/_____/_____
 _____/_____/_____

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY? YES NO

*Please bring this completed form to your confirmation interview. After it's signed return it to:
 Crossroads Community Cathedral
 (ATTN: Membership)
 1492 Silver Lane, East Hartford, CT 06118*

For Office Use Only	
<i>Confirmed</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Info Entered</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>	_____
<i>Initials</i>	_____



THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION

“Rejoice with those who rejoice”
(Romans 12:15)

CHURCH LIFE IS COMMUNITY LIFE, therefore significant events in the life of the church happen in community. Acknowledging that we have a new Participating Member among us is almost as significant as rejoicing over someone’s salvation. They are both celebrations tied to someone joining Christ: a new believer is connecting with Christ’s invisible Body—a new member is joining His visible one.

The format for our celebration of new members is simple. At a designated New Community, we will have a time for all newly confirmed Participating Members to stand—in their places where they have been sitting with other community friends—and the church will welcome them corporately. When a newly confirmed member turns in his or her Participating Member Confirmation Form, we will then send a list of upcoming celebration times so you can be there. We won’t call everyone up on the stage, but we would be remiss if we didn’t have some way to let everyone know who are the new members among us. The focal point of the celebration includes not only the larger corporate gathering, but the church in its smallest form—the small group. The new member’s group sits with him or her as a sign of their support, and as a reminder to the new member of the commitment being made to serve and love those people in particular (as well as the church as a whole).

Our celebration with you is a celebration of what Christ has done in your life, and what He is doing through you to affect others in the church. All of our human actions have a divine aspect—what we do to each other and with each other is indeed what we do to and for Christ. We see His work in you, and we’re glad because you affirm His work in those around you through your Participating Member commitment. We rejoice with you and because of you—as unto Christ.



RENEWING YOUR PARTICIPATING MEMBERSHIP

IT IS COMMON TO FIND LOCAL CHURCH membership roles that are ridiculously inaccurate. Often, several times more “members” show up on the list than actually show up for the weekend services. People may be listed who don’t even live in the area anymore; or if they do, they haven’t attended the church in years. (Some churches even have deceased members on their list!) This problem stems from a philosophy that says once a person has been accepted into the fellowship of the church, he or she should be considered a member for life—unless the church is notified of a change.

At Crossroads Community Cathedral, we want our membership list to reflect accurately who is a Participating Member and who is not. To ensure this accuracy, we periodically renew everyone’s membership. In this way, we can be sure we don’t lose touch. The names on our roles represent people—real people. Every one of them continues to affirm that he or she is a Participating Member in the church, not just a series of bytes on the database of the church’s computer. We think it a matter of integrity both for the church and for each member to be sure our Participating Member information truly reflects reality.

Four values under-gird the design of the membership renewal procedures at Crossroads:

1. Relationships are the key to how the process works. New members are affirmed by leaders; they also need to be reaffirmed by caring shepherds.
2. Renewal shouldn’t become a formality. Like the initial affirmation and confirmation process, renewal should provide Participating Members with a valuable spiritual experience.
3. The integrity of the membership roster should be upheld. The renewal process insures that integrity.
4. The process should require minimal central administration. Keeping track of renewals should not become a burden.

RENEWING YOUR PARTICIPATING MEMBERSHIP

What exactly are the steps for renewing membership? Each year you'll receive a renewal form. You will read over the material, fill in the appropriate information, and pray about your decision to renew. Your small group leader (or someone from the staff) will review your renewal affirmations. In most cases, the renewal will be confirmed and the information forwarded to the membership secretary. If any concern arises that needs further discussion, an elder or some other qualified person may get involved. In some cases, it will be mutually agreed upon to delay the renewal until the issue gets resolved. As with the initial Participating Membership interview, there is nothing "automatic" about how you'll proceed. The main thing is to accurately assess where you are spiritually, where you want to be, and how best to get there.

When you are contacted about your membership renewal, think of it as a way to say "Count on me" once again. We promise it won't be a tedious experience. If you have any questions about this process, feel free to contact a staff member to help.

SECTION 5

APPENDIX



STATEMENT ON BAPTISM

WHEN PEOPLE CONSIDER THE TOPIC OF BAPTISM, two categories of questions are often asked. The first is a very basic one: “What is the spiritual significance of baptism?” The second has to do with traditions from the past—specifically, pre-conversion baptism. The issue in that case is, “Why be baptized as an adult believer when I was baptized as a baby?”

Biblical Passages Concerning Baptism

At Crossroads Community Cathedral, the Scriptures are the source of our beliefs, including our views on baptism. A few key passages can help us see what purpose baptism plays in the life of a believer.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus commands His followers to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...” Baptism is the means by which disciples of Christ are identified. And because Christ Himself commanded it, Christ-followers willingly submit to it.

In passages such as Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47-48 it is evident that the act of baptism came *after* an individual’s decision to trust Christ for salvation. It was an outward sign of something that had occurred in the person’s life (usually quite recently). No one would dream of being baptized unless they had made a decision to identify with Christ. And no one could make that decision for them. The New Testament records the baptisms of adults who are believers, but never of infants. Baptism can’t give a person anything, spiritually speaking. It can only signify something that has already happened.

In Romans 6:1-11, the apostle Paul explains how the immersion mode of baptism identifies the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Going under water pictures Christ's death. Coming out of the water illustrates His resurrection. For that reason we use the immersion method of baptism. The value of the ordinance of baptism is in the life and heart of the believer.

Infant Baptism

If the purpose of baptism is to publicly identify a new believer in Jesus Christ, the question may be asked, "Why are so many people baptized as babies?"

In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them, prayed for them, and told his disciples to welcome them. But He *did not* baptize them, and he *did not tell anyone else* to baptize them. Baptism is appropriate only for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

If you were baptized as a child, it was no doubt the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your baptism as an adult can be viewed as the fulfillment of your parents' wishes. It in no way repudiates the baptism you received as a child.

A Guiding Statement on Baptism

The congregation of Crossroads understands the Scripture to teach that only professing believers qualify for baptism.

Scriptural teaching on baptism may be summarized as follows:

1. Baptism is an act of obedience to the command of Christ, fulfilled by individuals who have subjected themselves to His sovereignty.
2. Baptism symbolizes the spiritual cleansing through divine forgiveness and newness of life experienced by believers by virtue of their identification with Christ in His death and Resurrection.
3. Baptism provides an opportunity for believers to make a formal profession of their faith before the church.
4. Because Christ commands believers to be baptized it may be considered a prerequisite for joining the membership of the church.

Although the old covenant practice of infant circumcision is sometimes adduced as a rationale for infant baptism, the biblical definition of the functions of circumcision and of baptism shows that those two institutions fulfilled different purposes in their respective covenants. The equation is never made in the Bible between the circumcision of male infants in the old covenant and the baptism of born-again believers, much less of infants, in the new covenant. However, Crossroads encourages Christian parents to present their children for the ceremony of dedication, whereby God's blessing is formally invoked upon the children, and the parents publicly commit themselves to raise the children in accordance with the teachings of Scripture.

It is the request of the Leadership that children wait until they are twelve years old to be baptized.

It is understood that the value lies in the symbolism baptism conveys and in the faith of the participants.



STATEMENT ON DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE

BECAUSE MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY GOD as an indissoluble union, and since it is an earthly copy of the relationship between God and His people, it is to be kept inviolate. However, because of the fallenness of human nature, the Scriptures permit divorce in the following cases as an accommodation to human sin for the protection of the innocent party:

1. Divorce for the cause of immorality—with the understanding that the obligation to maintain or reinstate the marriage may not be imposed upon the innocent spouse.
2. Divorce for desertion—desertion being defined as behavior equivalent to the abandonment of the marriage relationship.

In such cases, the innocent spouse is not bound. He or she is free to remarry in the Lord (though the seeking of repentance and reconciliation should always be the first recourse).

The remarriage of the believers may not be approved when:

1. Divorce is being used as a vehicle to seek a different mate, since such pre-intent makes the divorce adulterous.
2. There is no evidence of repentance and brokenness over the circumstances that caused the divorce.
3. Restoration of the original marriage remains a viable option.

It is understood that the concerns above do not apply to divorces that have occurred before conversion.

Each case of divorce or remarriage has to be dealt with on an individual basis from the perspective of God's inexhaustible capacity to forgive human sin and to restore broken lives.

For a complete discussion of this subject, pick up a copy of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible" by Jay E. Adams in the Bookstore.



STATEMENT ON CHRISTIAN GIVING

IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES, God's people were required to contribute at least a tenth of their income to God's work (the tithe). Jesus supports this in the New Testament (Luke 11:42) with the words "*these you ought to have done.*" In fact, the New Testament endorses the practice of tithing, as a *minimum* guideline or a starting point for Christian giving. Obviously, the New Testament lays demands upon believers that exceed the giving of the tithe.

According to the New Testament, the totality of one's possessions belongs to God—not just the tithe (Matthew 6:19-34, 19:16-30, 25:14-30; Luke 9:23-25, 12:13-34, 16:1-13, 18:18-30, 21:1-4; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37).

The New Testament allows Christians to keep the portion of their income which is necessary to provide for them and their dependents so that they do not become a burden on society (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:8; 5:6-10). But the balance of their income is to be used for God's work and for deeds of charity (2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:16-18)

Thus, whereas the Old Testament required the contribution of only a tenth of one's income to God's work, the New Testament requires the total disposition of one's possessions for God's work, except for that portion which is to be kept to provide for oneself and one's relatives with reasonable safeguards for the future. On this basis, if a tenth of one's income is sufficient to provide for one's own and family needs, the remaining ninety percent belongs to God's work.

This approach to giving reflects the radical transformation of pagan materialistic values that takes place under the impact of the Gospel as the quest for personal advantage gives way to the desire to worship God through total disposition of oneself to His service and to the service of others (Romans 12:1).

The expansion of the old covenant standard of tithing into the principle of total giving provides an explanation for the relative silence on this issue of tithing in the New Testament. The implications of the New Testament principle of total disposition reduces tithing to a beginner's exercise, a minimum reference that is to be increased in proportion to one's income and one's growth in Christ.

For Christians whose limited income is only sufficient for subsistence, the tithe provides a goal to attain.

For more affluent Christians whose income exceeds their needs, the tithe becomes restrictive. It is to be surpassed in the same measure that God prospers them.

To ensure the proper functioning of the ministries of the local church, it is appropriate for a Body of believers to expect that, apart from other giving, at least a tenth of their constituents' income be contributed to the local church that serves them. Both the Old and New Testament offer warrant to uphold such a standard (Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23). The New Testament enjoins believers to support generously the ministry of their local church (1 Corinthians 9:11-14; Galatians 6:6).

According to the New Testament, the responsibility for the proper apportionment of a believer's giving is a matter of individual conscience rather than a function of the Body. However, the church is to exercise watch-care over its constituency to protect it from the sin of greed which is cause for church discipline and excommunication (1 Corinthians 5:10-11; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5).

When Christians learn to regard the totality of "their" possessions as belonging not to themselves, but to God, they develop a joyful sense of freedom from the instinct of possessiveness. They view their possessions as divine entrustments placed in their care for the purpose of ministry. As a result, their giving is not based on legalistic calculations of grudgingly accepted impositions. It becomes the spontaneous heart response of grateful spirits answering cheerfully and generously to God's love. The biblical measure for giving is to be found in a grateful heart, not in the devices of an electronic calculator (Acts 20:35).

STATEMENT ON WOMEN AND MEN IN MINISTRY

WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT men and women were created by God and equally bear His image (Genesis 1:27). God's intention was for them to share oneness and community (Genesis 2:23-24), even as the Godhead experiences oneness within the Trinity. Each had a direct relationship with God and they shared jointly the responsibilities of rearing children and having dominion over the created order (Genesis 1:26-28). However, human oneness was shattered by the Fall. The struggle for power and the desire to "rule over" another is part of the result of human sin. Genesis 3:16 is a prediction of the effects of the Fall rather than a prescription of God's ideal order.

However, God has acted in Christ to redeem the human race, and to offer to all people the opportunity to be part of the new community, His church. It is God's intention for His children to experience the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son (John 17:11, 20-23). This means that old divisions and hierarchies between genders and races are not to be tolerated in the church, where all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

In the formation of the church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on women and men alike, as had been predicted long before the coming of Christ (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:18). In the New Testament, women as well as men exercise prophetic and priestly functions (Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 11:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9-10). Further, the Spirit bestows gifts on all members of the Church sovereignty, without giving anyone preferential treatment based on gender (Acts 2:1-21; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11). Every believer is to offer her or his gifts for the benefit of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11). To prevent believers from exercising their spiritual gifts is to quench the work of the Spirit.

In all attempts to understand and put into practice appropriate relationships between genders in the Body of Christ, our sole authority is the will of God as expressed in Scripture. A few isolated scriptural texts appear to restrict the full ministry freedom of women. The interpretation of those passages must take into account their relation to the broader teaching of Scripture and their specific contexts. We believe that, when the Bible is interpreted comprehensively, it teaches the full equality of men and women in status, giftedness, and opportunity for ministry. In the Assemblies of God, women can be Credentialed and hold every ministry status. As of 1995 there were 4,773 female credential holders serving in a variety of ministry offices including: Evangelist, Foreign and Home Missionaries, Senior Pastor, Sectional Presbyter and Teacher.

We as a church support men and women in ministry whether it be teaching a class, serving as an usher, bringing God's Word from the pulpit, or other service to the Body based on giftedness and character.

For further study and more complete discussion of the key scriptural passages pertaining to this issue, we recommend:

Bilezikian, Gilbert, Beyond Sex Roles, Baker
Barton, Ruth, Becoming a Woman of Strength, Shaw
Hull, Gretchen, Equal to Serve, Fleming H. Revell
Keener, Craig, Paul, Women, Wives, Hendrickson
Ogden, Greg, The New Reformation, Zondervan
Spencer, Aida, Beyond the Curse, Hendrickson

STATEMENT ON PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP

WORSHIP IS SO IMPORTANT to the believer. The Bible is full of references to worship.

In Genesis 22:5 we see Abraham preparing to offer a sacrifice to God. It was to be the life of his only son. But on that day God provided a lamb for the sacrifice. Abraham's willingness to make this sacrificial offering to God is looked on as the highest form of worship. And that's what worship really means. Worship is sacrificial service to God.

Jesus directly relates worship to service during His time of temptation. In Matthew 4:9, Satan ask Jesus to *fall down and worship* him. Jesus replied, "*You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve.*"

Scripture challenges us to worship God through service. Romans 12:1,2 reminds us that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. This is what is acceptable and pleasing to God.

Can you picture an altar? Can you see yourself climbing on that altar and presenting yourself to Christ? Can you hear yourself saying, "Here's my life, use my life like You will"?

This is true Pentecostal worship. The Holy Spirit fills our life. We sacrifice our values for His values. We lay our life on the altar of sacrifice. And Christ says, "OK, now get off the altar and use your life for Me."

Perhaps the most visible form of worship is when a Pentecostal congregation gathers to express their worship through praise.

Whatever else, Pentecostal services should not be dull. And the reason is simple. It's because of the presence of God in our midst. A Pentecostal gathering is characterized by people singing and proclaiming the wonderful

works of God. This is what happened in the first church (Acts 2:11). It is a central theme of our congregational gatherings today.

Repentance has been followed by joy. And it is only natural for us to express our love and praise to God with bursting thanksgiving and joyful singing. We encourage all people to follow the guidance of Psalm 150 and freely express praise to the Lord.

We worship God through the use of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts aid us in our praise. Spiritual gifts help us serve one another and God.

It is sometimes difficult for us in a consumer society to come to a gathering with a mindset to serve. We want to sit back and be served. We are programmed by our society to be customers. But God invites us to be managers. He asks us to be ministers, stewards unto God of His wonderful grace.

Pentecostal worship recognizes that God is looking in on us and takes pleasure in the praises of His people. We want to please Him with our praise and with our actions. Thus, Pentecostal worship is an offering of ourselves in service to God and man. We serve God by exalting Him. We serve man by reaching out to him. And that service is enhanced or *empowered* by the Holy Spirit who lives within us (Acts 1:8).

We want you to come and join us. Like King David said (Psalm 150:6), “*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*” In our congregation meetings and in our daily lives let us commit our gifts and bow ourselves in the service of worship, to Him.

Crossroads Community Cathedral

Constitution & Bylaws



CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like, precious faith, where the Holy Ghost may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands; we, whose names appear upon the assembly roster under above date, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local assembly in fellowship with and a part of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, and of the Southern New England District Council of the Assemblies of God; and declare that we hereby adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

GOALS

- (1) To worship God.
- (2) To strengthen the Body of Christ.
- (3) To reach the unchurched.
- (4) To present Christ as Savior and Lord.
- (5) To train all who accept the Gospel message.
- (6) To accept members who will take an active part in the church Body.
- (7) To train these members and put them to work at performing these goals.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. NAME

Revised April 7, 2002

The name of this church shall be Crossroads Community Cathedral.

ARTICLE II. PREROGATIVES

Section 1:

This Assemblies of God church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:3, 13).

Section 2:

In connection therewith, or incidental thereto, it shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest, or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels and personal property as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes; all in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws or as the same may be hereafter amended.

ARTICLE III. AFFILIATION AND RELATIONSHIP

This assembly declares itself to be voluntarily in full cooperative fellowship with all other churches affiliated with the Southern New England District Council, and The General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri; and shares in the privileges and assumes the responsibilities enjoined by this affiliation.

- A. As a member of the General Council this assembly agrees to:
 - (1) Cooperate by every possible means in extension of God's work and Kingdom throughout the world.
 - (2) Support the missionary program agreed upon by the District and General Councils.
 - (3) Participate in District and General Council sessions via duly chosen delegates.
 - (4) Invite the counsel of the district officary in the event of church difficulty and when changing pastors.

- (5) Share in support of the District and General Council. (See General Council Bylaws, Article XVIII, Section 1. c. (2), and Section 2.)
- (6) Recognize that the District Council or The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall have the right and authority to:
 - (a) Approve scriptural doctrine and conduct;
 - (b) Disapprove unscriptural doctrine and conduct, as stated in Article III, paragraph f., of the General Council constitution; and
 - (c) Withdraw its certificate of membership if deemed necessary

ARTICLE VI. TENETS OF FAITH

This assembly accepts the Holy Scriptures as the revealed will of God, the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and for the purpose of maintaining general unity, adopts the Statement of Fundamental Truths of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, to wit:

1. The Scriptures Inspired

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. The One True God

The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship, and association as Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 43:10, 11; Matt. 28:19; Luke 3:22).

3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

- (a) His virgin birth (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35).
- (b) His sinless life (Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- (d) His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4).
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:3).

4. The Fall of Man

Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, by voluntary transgression, man fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death; which is separation from God (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:17; 3:6; Rom. 5:12-19).

5. The Salvation of Man

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

(a) Conditions to Salvation

Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Rom. 10:13-15; Eph. 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).

(b) The Evidences of Salvation

The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24; Titus 2:12)

6. The Ordinances of the Church

(a) Baptism in Water

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48; Rom. 6:4).

(b) Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements—bread and the fruit of the vine—is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Cor. 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!"

7. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their

uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost comes such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

8. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

The baptism of the believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

9. Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:12). The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 2:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-11, 13; 8:1, 2, 13; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:12, 13; I Peter 1:5).

10. The Church and Its Mission

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven (Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:22; Heb. 12:23).

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man, and to build a Body of believers in the image of His Son, the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

- (a) To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).
- (b) To be a corporate Body in which man may worship God (1 Cor. 12:13).
- (c) To be a channel of God's purpose to build a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Cor. 14:12).

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience:

- (a) Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Heb. 2:3, 4).
- (b) Adds a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God (1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Cor. 12, 13 and 14).
- (c) Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the Body of Christ (Gal. 5:22-26; 1 Cor. 14:12; Eph. 4:11, 12; 1 Cor. 12:28; Col. 1:29).

11. The Ministry

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the threefold purpose of leading the Church in:

- (1) Evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20).
- (2) Worship of God (John 4:23, 24).
- (3) Building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph. 4:11-16).

12. Divine Healing

Divine healing is an integral part of the Gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isa. 53:4, 5; Matt. 8:16, 17; James 5:14-16).

13. The Blessed Hope

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rom. 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

14. The Millennial Reign of Christ

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zech. 14:5; Matt. 24:27, 30; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezek. 37:21, 22; Zeph. 3:19, 20; Rom. 11:26, 27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isa. 11:6-9; Ps. 72:3-8; Micah 4:3, 4).

15. The Final Judgment

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

16. The New Heavens and the New Earth

We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21, 22).

ARTICLE V. ORDINANCES

Section 1:

The Ordinance of Baptism by immersion in water (Matt. 28:19) shall be administered to all those who have repented of their sins and who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12).

Section 2:

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP

PURPOSE OF MEMBERSHIP

While membership is not necessary for a person to be a member of God's Kingdom, membership is open to those Christians who adhere to the philosophy of ministry as set forth in the Participating Membership Manual of Crossroads Community Cathedral.

Members are expected to give of their time, talent, finances, etc., and actively work together in promoting the work of the Kingdom under the direction of the Pastor, and the God-appointed leadership of Crossroads Community Cathedral.

Application for membership should be understood as an agreement with and a willingness to become a working disciple for the good of the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

Section 1: Membership Eligibility

Membership in this assembly shall be open to all those who give evidence of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily subscribe to its tenets of faith and agree to be governed by its Constitution and Bylaws as herein set forth, and who satisfactorily complete the Participating Membership requirements.

Section 2: Categories of Membership

(1) Participating Membership

All those who meet the scriptural standards for membership, whose names appeared on the membership roll of the assembly at the time this Constitution was adopted, together with those names that shall be added having met the Participating Membership requirements shall constitute the legal voting membership of the assembly, provided they are 18 years of age or over, they regularly attend and take part in the services, they are living consistent Christian lives and they are in agreement with our distinctive purpose and philosophy as outlined in the Participating Membership Manual.

(2) Junior Membership

Junior membership shall be available for young people under 18 years of age who commit themselves to membership as prescribed in the Participating Membership Manual. Junior members shall become voting members at the age of 18.

(3) Children Member

All children of adults who hold Participating Membership will be considered non-voting children members until they become 18 years of age or until they hold Junior Membership status.

(4) Inactive Membership

Enrolled members who shall without good cause absent themselves from the services of the assembly for a period of three consecutive months or more, or who cease to contribute of their means to its support, or who may be under charges of misconduct, or who may have fallen under condemnation through sinful or worldly practices, shall be considered as inactive members and shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to the fellowship, their standing to be settled by the definite action of the assembly through its elected officers. Such inactive members may be dropped from the membership rolls by the Official Church Board after proper notice and hearing. A letter of intent shall be sent by the church secretary a minimum of two weeks before any action is taken.

All members have the right to appear before the Board on their own behalf. If the Official Church Board, after hearing, removes such inactive member from the church rolls, such member shall have the right of appeal to the full membership of the congregation. A majority vote of the congregation shall be final.

(5) Honorary Members

Honorary members (nonvoting) shall consist of those members who have entered the ministry as District Officers, Pastors, Evangelists, Missionaries, religious educators, or those serving in the Armed Services, making it impossible to serve as active members. Honorary membership recognition shall continue as long as the member maintains a consistent Christian life, remains sound in doctrine, and maintains a cooperative attitude toward the home assembly.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

Section 1: Officers

There shall be a Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, and an Official Church Board consisting of a Board of Elders, Deacons, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Other officers shall be added at any duly warned special or regular meeting.

Section 2: Official Church Board

A. The Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall serve the church and shall act in an advisory capacity with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the assembly in its spiritual life and the ministry of its ordinances. They shall be trained in the administration of spiritual matters.

The Elders shall be men of mature Christian experience and knowledge who shall be expected to meet the requirements as set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:1-9. In addition they must be:

A representative and a protector of Church Doctrine. Acts 15:5, 6; 15:22; 16:4. Able to minister. James 5:14

B. The Board of Deacons

(1) The Board of Deacons, consisting of not less than three members, shall function under the leadership of the Pastor and be responsible for the overseeing of and actively participating in the administrative affairs of the church. Of the Board of Deacons, one may be the Secretary and one the Treasurer.

- (2) The Deacons shall be men of mature Christian experience and knowledge, who shall be expected to meet the requirements as set forth in 1 Tim 3 and Acts 6. Deacons are expected to be examples in every area of the Christian walk (i.e., family, morals, tithing, Christian conduct, etc.). Discrepancy in any area will disqualify said member from office.
- C. The Secretary and Treasurer
- (1) The Secretary shall function under the leadership of the Pastor and shall be responsible for keeping Official Church Records and Minutes, and shall perform any other work necessary to the proper discharge of his/her duties.
 - (2) The Treasurer shall function under the leadership of the Pastor and shall be responsible for the accounting and reporting of all financial matters of the church. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be required by the Pastor and the Official Church Board necessary to proper discharge of said duties.
 - (3) The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be Christians of mature experience and knowledge who are Spirit filled. They are to be examples in every area of the Christian walk, (i.e., family, morals, tithing, Christian conduct, etc.). Discrepancy in any area will disqualify said member from office.
- D. All matters of Church government shall be carried on by the Official Church Board except in matters pertaining to Article XI of the Constitution concerning the disposition of church real property and except purchase and sale of real estate and the construction of new buildings and the institution of a Christian school. In such cases, they shall present their recommendations to the church for ratification by majority vote. Members of the Official Church Board shall be at least 21 years old and shall have been full members of the assembly for at least one year.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

Section 1: Meetings for Public Worship

Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Lord's Day and during the week as may be provided for under the direction of the Pastor and the Official Church Board.

Section 2: Annual Business Meeting

There shall be an annual business meeting of the assembly, at which time the election of officers shall take place and the report of all officers shall be presented. The time and place shall be given on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of said meeting.

Section 3: Special Business Meeting

Special business meetings of the assembly may be called when necessary, after proper notice has been given by the Pastor or by the Secretary of the assembly, provided the meeting has been agreed upon by a majority of the Official Church Board. Special meetings may also be called by petition having been signed by not less than one-third of the active full membership of the assembly, the petition to be placed in the hands of the Pastor or the Secretary and announcement made on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of the meeting. However, before the right of petition is exercised, the church may request the help of the district officary.

Section 4: Quorum

All full members who are present and voting at a duly warned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5: Board Meetings

The Official Church Board, with the Pastor, shall meet regularly or as necessary for the transaction of routine business for the assembly, the time and place to be announced by the Pastor.

ARTICLE IX. DEPARTMENTS AND COMMITTEES

Section 1: Christian Education

There shall be a Christian Education Department created and conducted as a branch of the church activities.

Section 2: Youth Ministries

There shall be a Youth Department formed under the supervision of the Pastor and the Official Church Board.

Section 3: Men's and Women's Ministries

There shall be Men's and Women's Departments which shall be formed and conducted under the supervision of the Pastor and the Official Church Board.

Section 4: Other Departments, Committees, Meetings or Ministries

As need arises other departments, committees, meetings or ministries, may be established. These must be approved by the Pastor and the Official Church Board. Any meetings involving the membership, in whole or in part, of Crossroads Community Cathedral, must be approved by the Pastor and the Official Church Board.

Section 5: Relationships

All committee and/or department chairpersons shall be appointed by the Pastor.

ARTICLE X. FINANCES

All funds for the maintenance of the assembly shall be provided by the voluntary contributions, tithes and offerings of the members and friends of the organization. Offerings shall be accepted by the assembly at such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the Pastor and the Official Church Board, and shall be administered by the Treasurer under their direction (Mal. 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:6-8).

Any interest income derived from investment of church funds shall be considered as offerings.

ARTICLES XI. PROPERTY

Section 1:

All property of the assembly shall be deeded to the assembly and held in its name.

Section 2:

In the event defection shall occur from the tenets of faith of this church as the same are stated in the Statement of Fundamental Truths in the Constitution of The General Assemblies of God, any portion of the membership subscribing to and practicing the aforesaid tenets of faith and retaining membership with the Crossroads Community Cathedral shall retain possession of, and title to, all properties of said church with full rights thereto as provided in its Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 3:

In the event this church shall cease to function for the purposes as declared heretofore in its Constitution and Bylaws, then after providing for the payment of its debts, the remaining assets will not inure to the benefit of any private person or persons but all such remaining assets shall be transferred and assigned to either the Southern New England District of the Assemblies of God

Inc., having a principal office in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, or transferred and assigned to such other church or churches or ecclesiastical body or bodies having the same Tenets of Faith as stated in this Constitution of the Crossroads Community Cathedral.

Section 4:

If at any time the General Council of the Assemblies of God deviates from the Tenets of Faith as presently stated in its Articles of Agreement, Constitution and Bylaws or changes its structure and method of operation from that presently set forth therein, then this church shall have the right to withdraw from said council and continue to operate as an independent church under the Tenets of Faith as herein set forth. Such decision to withdraw shall be made by a two-thirds vote of the full membership of this church present and voting at a regular or special meeting duly warned for such purpose.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the assembly in attendance at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose, provided due notice of such proposed change shall have been made at all the services on at least two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the time of such meeting. It shall be understood that this does not apply to the Article of Faith, which stands regardless of majority.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1: Senior Pastor

- (a) The Pastor shall be the spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall lead it in all its activities.
- (b) He shall be President of the corporation and shall act as chairman of all business meetings of the assembly and of the Official Church Board.
- (c) He shall, with the members of the Official Church Board, provide for all special meetings, conventions, and revivals. No person shall be invited to preach in the assembly without his approval.
- (d) He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and departments.
- (e) He shall perform any and all other duties which may normally be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and which shall not have been assigned to other officers of the assembly.

Section 2: Executive Pastor

- (a) The Executive Pastor shall be under the Senior Pastor.
- (b) Under the Senior Pastor He shall be the spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall lead it in all its activities.
- (c) He shall be a member of the Official Church Board and in the absence of the Senior Pastor act as chairman of all business meetings of the assembly and of the Official Church Board.
- (d) He shall be empowered to sign official documents in the absence of the Senior Pastor.
- (e) He shall give direct oversight to the day to day operation of the church, its staff and operations.

Section 3: Board of Elders

The Board of Elders is appointed by the Pastor to serve the church. They shall:

- (a) Act in an advisory capacity with the Pastor in all spiritual matters of the assembly.
- (b) Shall share with the Pastor in the ministry of the ordinances of the church.
- (c) Shall perform any and all duties which pertain to the function of the Official Church Board.

Section 4: Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons is chosen to serve the church and therefore shall act in an advisory capacity with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the administrative affairs of the assembly. They shall act in the examination of applicants for membership and also in the administration of discipline.

Section 5: Secretary

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Official Church Board and business meetings of the assembly. He/she shall be responsible for keeping the records of membership, and shall perform any other work necessary to the proper discharge of his/her duties. He/she shall be responsible for the preservation of all legal documents and be custodian of the corporate seal of the church.

Section 6: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for depositing all funds in the name of the church in a bank selected by the Official Church Board. He or the Pastor shall make all disbursements by check, keep an itemized account of the receipts and disbursements, and shall make reports at the meetings of the Official Church Board.

Section 7: Quorum

A majority present at any meeting of the Official Church Board shall constitute a quorum, provided all the members have been notified to be present. In the event the assembly is temporarily without a Pastor or the Pastor is unable to be present, the Official Church Board shall be empowered to provide for its own chairman from its membership in order to transact business for the assembly.

ARTICLE II

ELECTIONS, VACANCIES AND HIRING PRACTICES

Section 1: Senior Pastor

The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period of time, to remain in office until he or the church desires to make a change. Two months notice must be given in either case. A change requires a two-thirds vote on the part of the church.

In the event the Senior Pastor is not reelected, he shall be given up to sixty days to relocate. Should serious charges be preferred against the Pastor, or his ministry has ceased to be effective, power is vested in the Official Church Board to ask for his resignation at any of its business meetings. If such resignation is refused, the Pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the action of the Official Church Board has been confirmed by two-thirds vote of members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose, such meeting to be presided over by the District Officiary. When a vacancy in the Pastorate shall occur, the Executive Pastor shall assume the office of Senior Pastor. In case a Senior Pastor is removed from office, a report of such action shall be made to the District Officiary.

Section 2: Executive Pastor

The Senior Pastor may submit an Executive Pastor to the Official Church Board for ratification. The Executive Pastor shall then be elected for an indefinite period of time, to remain in office until he, or the Senior Pastor, or the church desires to make a change. A change requires a two-thirds vote on the part of the church.

In the event the Executive Pastor is not reelected, he shall be given up to sixty days to relocate.

Section 3: Other Pastors and Employees

All associates and assistant pastors, directors of music, youth, education, and any other member of the pastoral or church staff, and all other church employees shall be appointed by the Pastor.

Church staff may be obtained through proper personnel procedures. Levels and/or reporting procedures are to be determined by the Church organizational structures. Termination of personnel and/or staff positions shall be at the discretion of the Pastor. Hiring shall be done by the Pastor after ratification by a two-thirds vote of the Official Church Board.

Section 4: Secretary & Treasurer, Vice Chairman

A Secretary and Treasurer shall be nominated annually by the Pastor, ratified by the Official Church Board and presented to the church membership at the annual meeting for election to their post. They shall be elected by a majority vote. Their term of office shall be for one year from the time of election.

Should a member of the congregation wish to place an additional name into nomination, the name of that person must be submitted to the Official Church Board for review two months prior to the annual meeting. The nominated person shall be examined to see if he/she meets the necessary qualifications.

A Vice Chairman of the Official Church Board shall be appointed by the Pastor.

Section 5: Elders

The Elders shall be appointed by the Pastor. The Pastor may nominate from the Elders a number not to exceed the number of elected Deacons to serve on the Official Church Board as the Board of Elders. This Board of Elders shall become members of the Official Church Board with full voting privileges and shall hold that office until the next annual church meeting.

Nothing herein contained shall in anywise prevent an elected member of the Board of Deacons from serving as an Elder at the same time.

Section 6: Deacons

- (a) The Board of Deacons shall be nominated by the Pastor, ratified by the Official Church Board and presented to the church membership at the annual meeting for election to their post. They shall be elected by a majority vote. A Deacon shall be elected for a period of three years. At the end of the three-year term of the office he shall be ineligible for nomination for a one-year period. After the one-year ineligibility, he shall again be eligible for nomination to the Official Church Board.
- (b) Should a member of the congregation wish to place an additional name into nomination, the name of that person must be submitted to the Official Church Board for review two months prior to the annual meeting. The nominated person shall be examined to see if he/she meets the necessary qualifications. (Article VII Section 2, B Constitution)

Section 7: Other Officers

Any other office may be added or declared vacant by majority vote of the Official Church Board at any of its business meetings. Grounds for such action may be unscriptural conduct, departure from the Tenets of Faith, incompetency in office, or any good and sufficient cause. Any person removed from office shall have opportunity for a fair and impartial hearing of his case before the assembly if he so desires.

In the event a vacancy shall occur in offices of the church (other than that of the Pastor) by reason of resignation, removal from office, or for any other cause, the Pastor shall be empowered to choose a replacement who shall serve until the next annual business meeting.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Standard of Membership

The standard of membership of this assembly shall be:

- (a) Evidence of a genuine experience in regeneration (the new birth).
John 1:12, 13; 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:18-25.
- (b) Evidence of a consistent Christian life. Romans 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13, 14; Eph. 4:17-32; 5:1, 2, 15; 1 John 1:6, 7.
- (c) To fully subscribe to the Tenets of Faith and the philosophy and purpose as set forth in the Constitution.
- (d) Willingness to contribute regularly to the support of the assembly according to ability.
- (e) Compliance with the sequence of membership as outlined in the Participating Membership Manual.

Section 2: Reception of Members

- (a) Persons desiring to become members of the assembly shall acquire and work through the Participating Membership Manual.
- (b) The Pastor shall present the names of those who apply for membership with his recommendation to the Official Church Board, who shall act upon said recommendation and render a final decision. All persons who shall have met the membership requirements and have been passed on favorably shall be received into the assembly publicly and their names inscribed on the roster.
- (c) Each year the member shall receive a renewal form. This renewal form will serve to affirm the Participating Membership status of each member as well as accurately assess the spiritual climate of the church Body.

Section 3: Discipline

- (a) Any member of the assembly who shall willfully absent himself from the regular services for a period of three consecutive months, or who may be under charges, shall be temporarily suspended from active voting membership pending investigation and final decision in his case.
- (b) Unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the Tenets of Faith or departure from the stated philosophy of ministries held by this assembly shall be considered sufficient grounds upon which any person may be disqualified as a member. Matt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17, 18; 1 Cor. 5:11; Gal. 1:8, 9; Titus 3:1-15.

Section 4: Severance of Membership

Members in good standing, who may wish to sever their relationship with the assembly, or who may desire to be transferred to another congregation, may apply to the Secretary for a letter, which shall be granted on the approval of the Official Church Board, said letter to be signed by the Pastor and the Secretary of the assembly.

Section 5: Revision of Membership Roll

The Senior Pastor shall be authorized to revise the membership roll of the assembly as necessary and to remove from the list of members the names of the deceased, and the names of those who may have withdrawn from the fellowship, or who may have fallen into sin and whose lives may have become inconsistent with the standards and teachings of the assembly in accordance with Article VI Section 2 (3) of the Constitution. If a name is removed for cause, the one whose name is removed shall be notified of the action by the Secretary. If appeal is made to the Official Church Board for reconsideration of its action and reinstatement is not granted, the dismissed member may appeal to the congregation. The action of the assembly, by a majority vote, shall be considered final. Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Thess. 3:6-15

ARTICLE IV

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Section 1:

The Christian Education Department shall be under the general supervision of the Pastor. A Director of Education and/or other officers and teachers may be appointed as needed and desired.

ARTICLE VI
PROPERTY RIGHTS

Section 1:

All property, real or personal, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred, or conveyed in the corporate name of the assembly.

Section 2:

No real property of the assembly shall be sold, leased, or mortgaged, or otherwise alienated unless the same first shall have been authorized by a vote of at least a majority of the membership who are in attendance and voting at a regular or special meeting of the assembly which has been called for the consideration of the proposal. No personal property may be sold, leased, or mortgaged, or otherwise alienated unless the same has been authorized by the Official Church Board.

Section 3:

The Pastor and the Secretary of the assembly shall certify in such conveyance, lease, or mortgage, that the same has been duly authorized and recommended by the vote of the membership of the assembly. Such certificates shall be held to be the conclusive evidence thereof.

ARTICLE VII
ORDER OF BUSINESS

Section 1: Regular Business Meeting

The order of business for regular business meetings shall be as follows:

- (1) Devotional
- (2) Reading of minutes of previous meeting
- (3) Report of Treasurer
- (4) Report of Committees
- (5) Unfinished Business
- (6) Election of Officers
- (7) New Business
- (8) Adjournment

Section 2: Special Business Meetings

The purpose of special business meetings shall be stated at the time the meetings are announced.

Section 3: Rules of Order

Unless otherwise provided for in this Constitution, the manner of conducting the business of this assembly shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VIII

AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the assembly by a two-thirds vote of the membership present, provided the proposed amendments have been published no less than two weeks before such duly warned regular or special meeting.





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