

**DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS  
AND  
THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES**

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## 1. Vision and Mission

Our vision (what we will do) is to see all people KNOW, LIVE, and TELL the love story of Jesus. Our mission (how we will do it) is to make disciples and plant churches.

## 2. Doctrinal Statement of Faith

### 2.1 Christian

City Life Church is *CHRISTIAN*

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**  
creator of heaven and earth.

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord**

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### 2.2 Protestant

City Life Church is *PROTESTANT*

Sola Gratia (GRACE Alone)

Solus Christus (CHRIST Alone)

Sola Fide (FAITH Alone)

Soli Deo Gloria (To the GLORY of GOD Alone)

Sola Scriptura (SCRIPTURE Alone)

"Our being made alive in Christ, and God's being 100% for us forever is... by God's grace alone, on the basis of Christ alone, received through faith alone, so that all things ultimately lead to the glory of God alone, with Scripture alone as the only, final, decisive, authority for discerning, teaching, and defending these truths" - John Piper

## 2.3 Evangelical

City Life Church is *EVANGELICAL*

### 2.3.1 The Word of God

We believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and right in all matters of faith and conduct. In matters not specifically addressed in the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32, 20:31; Acts 20:32

### 2.3.2 The Trinity

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

Gen. 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; Rom. 1:19-20; Eph. 4:5-6

#### 2.3.2.a God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He sovereignly rules over all things, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:21-22; Matt. 23:9; John 3:16, 6:27; Rom. 1:7; I Tim. 1:1-2; 2:5-6; I Pet. 1:3; Rev.1:6

#### 2.3.2.b God the Son, Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, fully man, fully God. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 20:28; Rom. 9:5, 8:46; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 1:4; Acts 1:11; Rom. 5:6-8, 6:9-10; Heb. 7:25; I Tim. 3:16; Col. 1:15-20

#### 2.3.2.c God the Holy Spirit

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

John 14:16-17,26, 15:26-27; John 16:9-14; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 3:16, 6:19; Gal. 5:22-26

### 2.3.3 Mankind

We believe God created both male and female in His own image for fellowship with Him; that mankind sinned against God and thereby incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a

consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature, are sinners by choice, and are therefore under God's righteous, divine condemnation. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

Gen. 1:26, 2:17, 5:2; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:18-32, 3:9-19,23

#### 2.3.4 The Gospel of Salvation

We believe the Gospel is the good news that the death of Jesus Christ was a once for all substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our justification; that His resurrection conquered sin and death; that all who repent, forsake sin, and place their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered and saved from condemnation and receive the promise of eternal life through Christ's resurrection.

John 1:12-13, 3:14-21, 5:24, 8:12, 10:26; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:19; 8:1; 10; I John 1:9; II Cor. 5:17; I Cor. 15

#### 2.3.5 Evidence of Salvation

We believe biblical salvation is characterized by godly sorrow, repentance, and embracing Christ as one's Savior, Lord, and Treasure. This "re-birth" through the Spirit is evidenced by an understanding of God's Word, new affections for God and hatred for sin, desires to please Him and not the world, and works by the obedience of faith. These new works do not produce salvation but rather are the natural fruits of true saving faith. They do not earn grace but are rather evidence of grace.

Eph. 2; Rom. 1:15; Philip. 2:12-13; John 15; Gal. 3:3; I Peter 2:2-3; II Peter 1:10

#### 2.3.6 Christian Conduct, Sanctification, and Perseverance

A. We believe that a Christian should conduct their life solely for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow man; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful and generous steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

I Cor. 10:31; Rom. 12:1-3; Heb. 12:1-2,14; John 14:15, 23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Cor. 9:6-9; I Cor. 4:2; Col. 1:9-10; Heb. 2:10-11; 12:1-2,14; II Pet. 3:11-14; Eph. 4:17-32

B. We believe the Holy Spirit is the indwelling active agent in our progressive sanctification; that He seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed by His Word and we are conformed to the image of Christ; that though our battle with indwelling sin continues throughout our lives, as we are led by the Spirit, we are enabled to walk in the Spirit and so delight in God's commandments that we truly endeavor to live in this world for the glory of God.

Gal. 3:1-6, 5:16-26; I Cor. 1:1-2,30; II Cor. 3:17-18, 4:2, 6:17-18; Rom. 6:11-14; 8:29; 12:1-3; Col. 3:5-9; I Thess. 4:3-7; I John 2:3-6; John 14:15, 23-27, 15:11

C. We believe all Christians are commanded by God to persevere in their faith, knowing that they will give an account to God for their every word and deed; that the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, worship, giving, fellowship, confession of sin, and the active sharing of one's faith are provided by God as vital means of grace to assist us in our pursuit of holiness; that the believer's ultimate confidence of persevering in the faith is based solely on the grace and promise of God to keep all those who are His to the end.

Gal. 5:1-15, 6:11-18; I Tim. 4:15-16; James 1:12; Matt. 10:22, 24:13

### 2.3.7 The Church

We believe the Church exists to worship God, nurture believers, and evangelize the lost. We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members.

We believe in the local Church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, mission, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local Church the primary task of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world through preaching the Gospel and planting churches as visible evidence of an inaugurated Kingdom.

Eph. 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:19-23; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:23-25; Matt. 16:18; Acts 8:1, 11:22, 15:13-21, 20:28; I Cor. 1:11-17, 3:9-16, 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; I Tim.3:15

### 2.3.8 Church Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ gave two ordinances to the Church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and that they should be observed and administered until He returns:

#### 2.3.8.a Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism is an initiatory rite signifying entrance into relationship with God by which those who have repented and placed their faith in Christ and identify with his death, burial, and resurrection. We believe that this union with Christ is portrayed by immersion of the believer in water, representing death to the old life of unbelief and resurrection into new life with Christ. This rite is to be done in the name of the Triune God and practiced by the Church until Jesus returns.

Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:47-48, 16:14-15; Col. 2:11-12; Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:27; Matt. 28:16-20

#### 2.3.8.b Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ to signify the continuation of covenant and is to commemorate His atoning death and resurrection. We believe that only those who give a believable profession of faith and show reasonable evidence of believing in Christ should be baptized or partake in the communion elements.

I Cor. 11:23-30; Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20

### 2.3.9 The Doctrine of the Future

We believe the consummation of all things will happen in the visible and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the just and the unjust and to fulfill His kingdom in establishing the new heavens and the new earth. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the endless, conscious suffering of the wicked in hell.

Matt. 24:44, 25:13; Mark 13:32-33; Luke 12:40; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thess. 1:9-11, 4:13-17; Heb. 9:28; James 5:8; I John 3:2; Rev. 20:11-15, 22:8-20

### 2.3.10 Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

Gen 1:26-27

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

Gen. 2:18-25, 1 Cor. 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.

Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of City Life Church.

Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31

## 3. Theological Distinctives

### 3.1 Reformed

"We want to have a view of a big God because the God of the Bible is a big God who is sovereign over everything in our lives. He's sovereign over salvation. He's sovereign over presidents and politicians. He rules over it all, and he doesn't rule over it with an arbitrary iron fist, but he rules over it by the wonderful doctrine of providence, which means he is pro-us. He is for us, for his people in Christ, all of these things working together for our good." – Kevin DeYoung, Reformed Theological Seminary

### 3.2 The Sovereignty of God in Salvation

The salvation of humanity is fundamentally the work of God. Before the foundation of the world, God elected His people, setting His affection and grace upon them (Rom. 8:29-30). In love God predestined His people for adoption (Eph. 1:4-6). Faith is a gift of grace that is given by mercy and pleasure of God, so that no one may boast. Apart from the intervention of God, humanity cannot choose of his own accord to worship God and pursue righteousness (Rom. 3; Eph. 2:1-3). God's sovereignty in salvation is comprehensive: from first to last, all of salvation is the work of God.

### 3.3 Complementarianism

Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value but are distinct by divine design. As part of God's good created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church. This is not to diminish the roles of either men or women, but rather, to emphasize and

empower the roles and responsibilities God has uniquely designed us with to complement one another. As it relates to the church, men and women are both expected to lead; however, the offices of pastor and elder are reserved for qualified men

1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5:1,9

### 3.4 All Humans are Made in the Image of God (Imago Dei)

All human beings are created in the image of God, meaning, we are all thoughtfully and purposefully designed to reflect the beauty and creative nature of our God. In this, every human from before birth carries the dignity, worth, and identity as one who is valued by (created by) God. Regardless of race, language, culture, class, or gender (birth), all humans are to be respected, honored, and cherished as God's creation. This is why we condemn racism, abortion, bullying, abuse, and any other form of dehumanization.

Gen. 1:26-27; Col. 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:49; Gen. 9:6

### 3.5 All Believers are Joined in the Mission of God (Missio Dei)

All individual Christians, through the church, join Jesus on his mission. God then sends the Holy Spirit, partnered with Jesus, to empower the church, gather the church, and scatter the church into the world, which is the context in which God's mission occurs. Now the sent church joins Jesus' mission in the world as an instrument of the kingdom. The church isn't the door to the kingdom, but it has the keys to the door and there is no gate that can keep that door shut. We are ambassadors and instruments for advancing the mission of God through the gospel proclamation and demonstration, and as sent ones, we are to multiply and send new churches into our cities and around the world. By this, God's mission is fulfilled as the church is redeemed for God's glory, the mission becomes completed for God's glory, and all things are restored for God's glory.

Gen. 1:28; Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 4:18-19; John 20:21

## 4. Closed-Handed Versus Open-Handed Issues

Closed-handed issues are those things which are non-negotiable and are issues of biblical authority. Open-handed issues are those things which are debatable and are a matter of conscience and wisdom.

When it comes to open-handed issues, we desire to be biblically faithful (uncompromisingly holding to what the scriptures teach us to do and not do), and culturally accommodating (allowing things that scripture does not necessarily forbid) so that we are able to reach as many as possible.

The following are some examples of "open-handed" items, which are subject to individual conscience based on the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the scriptural principle of being "helpful" and "building up" (1 Cor. 10:23-33). Our church is made up of people who hold a diversity of convictions on the following topics:

- entertainment (music/television/movies)
- drinking
- smoking<sup>1</sup>
- political affiliation
- birthing methods

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the use of recreational marijuana, the guiding principle here would be biblical admonishment against drunkenness. It is generally agreed that the sole purpose of smoking or ingesting marijuana for recreational purposes is to get "high", which would be equivalent to drunkenness. Therefore, we view recreational marijuana usage as sinful.

- military involvement
- birth control<sup>2</sup>
- education (home/public/private)
- creation ideology (old earth/young earth, etc.)
- end-times ideology (pre-tribulation, post-tribulation, amillennial, etc.)
- spiritual gifts (continuationist/cessationist)
- capital punishment

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<sup>2</sup> We believe the bible views all human life as made in the image of God and therefore sacred. Because of this, abortion is sinful and a social evil to be abolished. Regarding certain types of preventative birth control, we recognize the diversity of opinion in the medical community as to whether some forms of birth control prevent pregnancy before or after fertilization. We view this debate as a matter of conscience.