

Crossway Network Policy Manual (Template)

For churches that choose to function without a formal membership policy.

In today's legal environment, it is essential that every church clearly defines its mission, purpose, and non-profit function as well as its agreed upon convictions and beliefs in the exercise of its faith. A Policy Manual (often called a church's "Constitution"), while not legally required like your state Articles of Incorporation and your Corporate Bylaws, provides this layer of explanation and protection in the event that there is legal conflict with the church. It is for church record and to be published publicly at your discretion. It does not need to be filed with any other authority or legal entity.

This document is intended to be a tool to help a church form its own policy manual but once edited and completed should be evaluated and affirmed by an attorney. The content of this template is fully consistent with Crossway Network's Statement of Faith, Biblical Convictions, and commitment to plurality in pastoral leadership.

To receive a MS Word Doc form of this document to edit for your church with permission, please email admin@crosswaynetwork.org.

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Policy Manual of [enter Church Name]

Adopted [enter Month, Day, Year]

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May need to be altered depending on the amount of editing and contextualizing a church does through the template.

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[Church Name]

PREAMBLE

We, the Pastors of [enter church name], do establish the following Articles, to which we voluntarily and solemnly submit ourselves.

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this organization shall be [enter church name]

ARTICLE 2: CORPORATION AND LOCATION

[Enter church name] is a/an [enter state in which you are incorporated] Corporation and as such, is incorporated in [enter state], with principal offices located at [enter location of offices]. This corporation is a religious corporation and is not organized for the private gain of any person. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE 3: AFFILIATION

[Enter Church Name] (hereafter referred to as [enter shortened name or initials if desired].) [church name] is a member of the Crossway Church Planting Network. Crossway Network is not a denomination, rather, it is "a movement of relationally networked, likeminded, autonomous and yet interdependent churches" that exists "to plant and support healthy, reproducing churches and regional networks of churches throughout the world for the glory of God.

[Add a description for each additional affiliation as necessary]

Example: Windsor Community Church is a member of The Gospel Coalition Network. The Gospel Coalition Network is "a fellowship of evangelical churches deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures."

In our affiliation with [list all affiliations], [enter church name] yields neither its authority nor its autonomy as a local church.

ARTICLE 4: PURPOSE

Our mission: **[Enter the church's specific mission statement]**

[Enter church name] exists to help people become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, seeking to fulfill both halves of his **Great Commission**: Reaching those who are not yet followers of Jesus ("...go and make disciples...") and discipling those who are followers of Jesus ("...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded...").

Ultimately as we live under the sovereign rule and loving care of Jesus, our lives will powerfully display joyful obedience to the **Great Commandment** to love God with all that we are and love others as ourselves.

The Great Commandment: Matthew 22:36-40

"And he (Jesus) said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'"

The Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-20

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

ARTICLE 5: STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) is the Word of God, fully inspired by Him and without error in the original manuscripts. The Scriptures contain the complete revelation of His will and plan for salvation. They are intended to teach, guide, correct, and nourish the believer, and are the final, divine authority for all matters of Christian faith and life.

2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Peter 1:20-21

B. The Godhead

We believe in one living and true God, creator of all things, perfect in every way, without beginning or end, and eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and that these are equal in every divine attribute and perfection.

Genesis 1:1, 26; Psalm 90:1-2; Isaiah 45:5-6, 21-22; Acts 17:24-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14

C. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We believe in His sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary and atoning death on the cross, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven where He is now exalted at the right hand of God and intercedes for His people as our High Priest, and His personal visible return to earth as promised in the Scriptures.

John 1:1-3, 14; Luke 1:26-37; Romans 3:21-25, 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-24; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16

D. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, regenerates the believer into new life in Christ at the moment of salvation, sanctifies the believer in Christlikeness, and seals the believer unto the day of redemption. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He guides, instructs and empowers them for godly living and service.

John 14:16, 26; Acts 1:8, Romans 8:16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:4, 10-16; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 1:13-14, Titus 3:5-6

E. Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that through Adam's sin man fell, and thereby incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal death. As a result, all human beings are born with a sin nature and are under the just condemnation of God. Because of sin man is alienated and separated from God and unable to remedy his lost condition.

Genesis 1:26; Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 2:1-10

F. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received through personal faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that those who repent of their sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, become new creatures in Christ, are freed from condemnation, and receive eternal life as God's children.

John 1:12-13, 3:3-6, 3:16, 14:6; Romans 10:9-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:8-10

G. The Church

We believe in the universal church, which is a living, spiritual body of Christ made up of all persons who have been regenerated and baptized by the Holy Spirit through saving faith in Jesus Christ, of which Christ is the head. We believe in the establishment of local churches as the pattern of the New Testament clearly defines. We believe in the autonomy of each local church under the headship of Christ to decide and govern its own affairs. We believe that God has given the local church the primary task of taking the good news of Jesus Christ to the world and helping believers grow and glorify the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22, 2:19-22, 4:14-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:15-16

H. Last Things

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day all believers will be faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged, and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

Matthew 16:27, 24:4-31; John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:40-58; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:1-11; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

I. Ordinances

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new believing community, the latter with ongoing spiritual remembrance and gratitude. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things. Without in any way diminishing the importance of baptism or its necessity for Christian obedience, we deny that water baptism regenerates or that it causes the new birth. In the Bible, uniformly, covenant signs, sacraments, or ordinances signify and confirm the spiritual realities that they represent; they do not produce those realities."

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41, 8:12-13, 10:47; Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

J. Marriage

We believe that 'marriage' means only a biblically authorized union between one man and one woman as husband and wife in which such union is a lifetime commitment. We believe the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife. We do not affirm, support or advocate two people of the same sex getting married and thus would not allow for a same sex marriage to be performed on our church premises or by one of our pastors.

Genesis 2:18-25, Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 7:1-4

K. Human Sexuality

Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as "porneia") including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, unrepentant lewd conduct and unrepentant creation, distribution, and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with a biblical witness and Christian character.

Genesis 19:1-22; Judges 19:1-21; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:24-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18; 1 Timothy 1:10

L. Transgenderism

God originally created two distinct and complementary sexes; a distinction plainly evident in the physiological makeup of the human race. Any understanding of gender as self-defined or self-determined stands in sharp opposition to the created order, to the Word of God and to the Creator himself. God in his wisdom, made humankind “male and female” beautifully and wonderfully complementing one another.

Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4

M. Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

Psalms 139

This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of [church name] faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our pastor board is [church name] final interpretive authority on the Bible’s meaning and application.

ARTICLE 6: BIBLICAL CONVICTIONS (Crossway DNA, 1)

Within our commitment to the foundational truths of historical Orthodox Christianity, we at [church name] have certain Biblical Convictions that set a foundation upon which all life and ministry are built. The following list of Biblical Convictions, while essential and central, is not exhaustive. These doctrines may set us apart in teaching, though hopefully not in spirit, from some of our other brothers and sisters in the Universal Body of Christ.

A. GOD’S WORD – OUR AUTHORITY FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

The Bible, as God's Word, is the ultimate authority over humanity. And because of the spiritual new birth, the believer’s life and ministry testifies to the power of the living Word.

1. The Bible is both **inspired** and without error in its original copy or manuscript (Process - 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16; Product- 2 Peter 3:15, 16) and **authoritative** for us today in all areas of life (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:2).

2. Because of the inward regeneration of the Spirit, commonly known as being "born again", believers can know and obey God's Word through the **illumination** of the Spirit. (Ezekiel 11:19-20; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Titus 1:16; 1 John 2:3-4; 3:9-10).
3. We believe there is but **one true biblical interpretation** or meaning with multiple applications (2 Peter 1:20, 21). The meaning is found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical, and historical methods of interpretation. Therefore, God's Word is **sufficient** for all of life and godliness. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
4. It is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus to carefully discern the true intent and meaning of the Scriptures, (Acts 17:11) knowing God's truth is timeless and for all generations. The **absolute truth** of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it (Matthew 5:18; 22:31; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; Hebrews 4:12).

B. SALVATION – GOD, THE AUTHOR FROM START TO FINISH

Salvation is a work of God, received by grace (unearned favor) through faith. Through believing and receiving Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in our place, we are saved and sustained unto eternal life.

1. God provided the only sacrifice needed for man's rebellion and sin. Through Jesus' life, death on the cross, and resurrection, God in his love, demonstrated his justice and ability to justify the sinner. (Isaiah 53:6; 59:2; 64:6; Romans 3:26; Hebrews 9:27; 1 Peter 3:18; 2:24; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 15).
2. Because of the lost, rebellious, darkened condition of man's heart (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4), no man would seek God or believe had it not been for God's gracious working and drawing of man to himself (Ephesians 2:4-10; John 6:35-40, 44; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6).
3. Because salvation is wholly of God, man cannot lose salvation. The genuine believer is eternally secure (John 6:37-40, 44; 1 Peter 1:2-5; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11; 2:4-10; Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Titus 3:5; 1 John 2:19; 5:11-13).

C. SANCTIFICATION – THE FRUIT OF TRANSFORMING GRACE

The life that is genuinely transformed by the gospel will increasingly show the fruit of obedience, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who permanently indwells Jesus' followers.

1. The reality of a person's salvation will be shown through the progressive transformation of their lives into greater likeness to Jesus (Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 2:3-4). See also: John 14:21-24; 15:8; Romans 6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 1:16; James 2:14-26; 1 John 3:8-10.
2. The personal fruit of God's Spirit will be evidenced in the individual believer's love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness towards God and others. They will also seek to put to death fleshly and worldly desires on a daily basis. (Galatians 5:22-24; Luke 14:25-27; Romans 7)
3. The sanctifying process happens as we abide in Jesus and allow the Word to guide and change us. This involves regularly receiving the conviction of the Holy Spirit and repenting of our sin in our continued battle with the flesh. This process leads us to a greater love and

compassion for the lost, and to living for his kingdom and glory. (John 15:1-17; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; John 16:13-15).

D. THE LOCAL CHURCH - A COMMUNITY ON MISSION

God's design is for local communities of believers to be intimately involved in one another's lives and spiritual growth, and intentionally living out the mission of making Jesus known.

1. The local church is a family of believers who are growing together in genuine love and sacrificial service. This is often best facilitated in smaller groups as Jesus primarily poured into the 12 disciples, and as we see believers meeting in homes. (1 Corinthians 12:20-26; Ephesians 2:19; 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:5; Titus 2:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-24; Acts 2:41-43).
2. God's strategy in evangelizing the world is through empowering individuals in the local church to live on mission and multiply churches. The New Testament demonstrates that the Local Church is the primary vehicle of training and sending believers to live on mission. (Matthew 9:37-38; 16:13-18; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-3; Acts 1:8; 2:41-43; 8:1-3; 11:22-26; 13:1-3; 14:21-28; 15:2-4, 22-36; 18:22; 20:17, 28, 32; 21:18-19; Philippians 1:27; 2:12-16).

E. THE LOCAL CHURCH - PLURALITY IN LEADERSHIP

God's design for leadership in any local church is a plurality of biblically qualified, mutually accountable men who shepherd, equip, and oversee the spiritual health of the body.

1. The local assembly is to be led and governed by a group of elder/pastors. (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Ephesians 4:11-13; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
2. These men are biblically qualified in regard to their character and competence as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
3. These men understand that they are simply under-shepherds of the chief shepherd, Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 5:1-5)

F. SPIRITUAL GIFTS - SPIRIT EMPOWERED AND BIBLICALLY GROUNDED

The Scriptures teach that the Spirit gives every believer supernatural gifts for the purpose of building up his church and expanding his kingdom.

1. God demonstrates his supernatural power through imparting spiritual gifts for the purpose of putting his glory and grace on display in advancing and affirming the gospel message and messenger. (Matthew 19:23-26; James 5:13-18; Romans 8:28; 12:3-8; Ephesians 5:).
2. God has given gifts to each believer for edifying or building up of the church body and advancing his kingdom (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11). It is important to understand that spiritual gifts are not for self-edification or self-expression but for the edification of others (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:3, 12, 17, 20-25, 26, 31).
3. For further clarifications on sign gifts, please see the Appendix A. at the end of this Policy Manual.

G. COMPLEMENTARY DESIGN OF MEN AND WOMEN – EQUAL IN VALUE, DISTINCT IN ROLES

God has created men and women wonderfully different as complements, of equal value, and with differing functions in the family and in the church, for the good of all.

1. God created all men and women in his own image and commissioned them to multiply and live in relationship with him (Genesis 1:24-29; 2:7-25; Galatians 3:23-29).
2. Men and women are distinct and complementary as seen fundamentally in the marriage relationship where the husband is called to sacrificial leadership as head of the home; as the wife is voluntarily called to follow her husband's leadership (Genesis 2:7-25; 3:1-19; 1 Corinthians 11:1-16; 14:34-35; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7)
3. God's created design is to be modeled also in the church body. Although equally valued and gifted, women are not to be in a position of authority or teaching over men. This would apply to any gathering of God's people - worship celebration, small groups, workshops, or seminars (Genesis 2:7-25; 3:1-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Corinthians 11:1-16). Qualified women who are gifted in leadership and teaching will have opportunities to utilize their gifts in women's ministries, service teams, or children's ministries, and many other vital ministries which function under the authority of the elders.

H. CHURCH DISCIPLINE - THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION

God has provided instructions for church restoration to lovingly keep individual believers from being ensnared by Satan and to maintain the purity of Jesus' Church.

1. God desires us to pursue and preserve the purity of the church body, not to punish or to exclude any individual. The purpose of the discipline process is to restore any believer who is ensnared by continual sin. (Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-13; Hebrews 12:4-13).
2. The Scriptures teach that the body is to be committed to one another in love. It instructs us how we are to pursue a brother or sister trapped in a sinful lifestyle. This process could sadly result in the removal of an individual from the fellowship of believers until repentance is demonstrated. (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; Hebrews 3:12, 13).

ARTICLE 7: MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY (Crossway DNA, 2)

A. GLORY TO GOD - DOING ALL FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE

God is supreme (Isaiah 46:9-10). He is our entire focus. He alone is worthy of all praise and honor. He is the reason the church exists. We seek to lift up the greatness and glory of God in all that we do (Romans 11:33-36) without compromise. See also Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 40:6-8, 12-17, 21-26; 51:6-7; Psalm 8; 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; 10:31.

B. GOSPEL CENTRALITY - KEEPING FIRST THINGS FIRST

There is only one gospel (Galatians 1:8) and it is central to all of life and ministry. It is *the* matter of first importance (1 Corinthians 15:3). The message of the gospel is timeless and unchanging. It is the focus of our daily lives and is the only message of hope for the world (Romans 1:16-17, 5:1-2, 6-11; 8:28-38; 1 Corinthians 1:18-30; 15:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:14).

C. INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP - MAKING, MATURING, & MULTIPLYING DISCIPLES

The church is only really growing when people are becoming Christians. Reaching, leading and helping people follow Jesus is the heart of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). As a result, our focus is on reaching people with the good news of the gospel. We desire “conversion” growth, not “transfer” growth. We realize that God, in his sovereignty, may move other Christians to serve in the church. We welcome these people if their hearts resonate with our vision and if they have sought to preserve the unity of the church they have come from. See also Matthew 4:19; Luke 19:10; John 17:18; Acts 2:39-42; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 2 Corinthians 5:18-22; Colossians 1:3-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:8.

D. EVERYDAY MISSION - REACHING YOUR WORLD

Without changing the message of the gospel, we seek to bring it with clarity and power into the world around us. This requires understanding the culture(s) in which we live, and seeking to communicate the gospel in a way that connects with the people around us (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). We believe every follower of Jesus should be equipped and actively living out the mission of sharing the gospel and leading people to Christ. This is often best accomplished when small groups of believers work together, praying for and engaging with those in their spheres of influence. See also Matthew 4:19; 9:37-10:42; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-24; Colossians 4:2-6; 1 Peter 1:13-16.

E. BIBLICAL COMMUNITY - LIVING OUT THE “ONE ANOTHERS”

We were created for relationship with both God and one another (Matthew 22:36-40). We believe that every Christian is to be experiencing genuine relationships with others in the body of Christ (Acts 2:42-47). These relationships are the primary context in which the “one-anothers” of scripture are experienced. Through these relationships, we learn to become more like Christ through serving others and being served in times of need. This is the true outworking of the New Commandment of Jesus in John 13:34-35. As we love one another, we show the world we are Jesus’ disciples. This is an important aspect of being effective as we seek to reach those around us for Christ. The world should be attracted to the love and joy that God’s people have amongst themselves. We are committed to fostering these kinds of relationships through small group communities. See also John 13:34-35; 17:13-21; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 5:5-6; 12:12-31; Ephesians 2:19; 4:25-32; James 5:16; Hebrews 3:13-14; 10:19-25.

F. TEAM LEADERSHIP - SERVING TOGETHER IN PLURALITY

We believe in the autonomy of the local church. We believe each church is to be led by a plurality of godly men who function as pastors (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9). We believe the role of pastor to be one and the same with the biblical terms overseer, elder, and bishop (see interchanging use of these terms to refer to a single role in Acts 20:28, 29 and 1 Peter 5:1-4). Among the plurality of pastors, there is recognition of differing giftedness and abilities in leadership that may set some apart from others in function, but not in authority. See also Acts 1:15; 15:13-22; Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3; 5:19; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17.

G. EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING - PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that God's word is the best and highest that we have to offer people. We are committed to sound doctrine (1 Timothy 3:15). For this reason, we are committed to primarily preaching expository sermons through entire books of the Bible, although the local pastors will take seasons to address the needs of their body through topical sermons. In our preaching, we believe the Word of God is for our transformation, not simply our information, and as such we will strive for application and life-change (Hebrews 4:12). See also Ezra 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:1-6; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2:1-2.

H. VIBRANT WORSHIP - STIRRING OUR AFFECTION FOR GOD

We were created to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23), which means worship is a way of life for the Christian and involves everything about us (Romans 12:1). As a significant part of this life of worship, our churches are committed to providing gathered worship settings and congregational singing where God's people praise Him in spirit and in truth.

IN SPIRIT: By cultivating a freedom of expression as God's Spirit engages the hearts of His people and empowers them to use their gifts and voices to worship Him with excellence (John 4:23-24; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:18-20).

IN TRUTH: By singing songs that celebrate and declare gospel truths and promote a high view of God and His glory (Psalm 9:2; 95:1; 100:1-2; 150:1-6; Romans 15:9, 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Hebrews 2:12; Revelation 5:6-10).

ARTICLE 8: LEADERSHIP CULTURE (Crossway DNA, 3)

The pastors and leaders at all levels at [church name] are committed to creating a leadership culture that reflects the following values.

A. GLORY TO GOD –LIVING AND LEADING FOR AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

Driven by worship. We desire for our leaders and influencers to be motivated by an “Audience of One.”-Do they seek God’s glory alone? Do they reflect John the Baptist’s heart when he said, “He (Jesus) must increase, and I must decrease” (John 3:30)? We want to avoid the hazards that come with self-importance and the need for personal recognition. No one individual is irreplaceable. It’s not about personalities, but the person of Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:1-9; 2 Corinthians 5:15). See also Colossians 3:23; Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 5:11-14.

B. GENUINE LOVE - ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER

Demonstrating encouraging love. We are committed to live out the New Commandment to love one another as we have been loved (John 13:34-35) so that all men will know we are his disciples. The greatest demonstration of true gospel faithfulness and obedience is to love our God with all our hearts, our souls, our minds, and all our strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:30-31). That love is clearly seen and described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and it (love) is evident in every true believer’s life (1 John 3:11-18; 4:7-21).

C. HUMILITY IN LEADING - EXCELLING AS SERVANTS

Striving for selflessness. God has given us the life and ministry of Jesus Christ to prove to us that He does not want us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. He wants us to give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:3, 10, 16). A couple of catch phrases that have emerged within Crossway Network churches that illustrate this value are, “we are all in process”, and “we have the ability to speak into one another’s lives.” The true essence of humility is not thinking less of yourself, but not thinking of yourself at all. See also Mark 10:41-45; John 3:30; 15:5; 1 Corinthians 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:21-23; 3:9; 5:1-4.

D. UNITY – MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Eager for harmony. Leaders in the church understand and embrace principles of unity. They must honor one another in speech and be quick to forgive (Ephesians 4:29; 1 Timothy 5:19). With the scripture and its gospel message as the foundation, leaders and ministry teams must seek God’s wisdom in a spirit of love and deference. See also Acts 15, Philippians 2:1-4; Acts 10; 13:1-4, 15; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; Ephesians 4:1-3, 29, 32; Romans 12:10.

E. PURPOSEFUL INVESTMENT - DEVELOPING LEADERS

Developing passionate leaders. Just as Jesus chose and trained leaders to carry on the work of the gospel after his life on earth (Matthew 4:18-22; 5:1-7:29; 10:1-42; 23:1-25:46; Mark 1:16-20; 2:14; 3:13-19; 6:6-13; 13:1-37; Luke 5:1-11; 6:17-49; John 1:35-51; 13:1-17; 14:1-17:26 and many other passages) so we seek to raise up passionate leaders who desire to follow hard after Jesus. Paul chose men to come alongside of him (Silas, John Mark, Timothy, Luke, and Titus) and he taught and trained them and sent them out to serve and lead churches (1 Timothy 1:18-

19; 2Timothy 1:6-14; 2:1-2). See also 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus. See also Exodus 18:17-27; Joshua 1:1-9

F. EMPOWERMENT - HONORING EACH OTHER'S GIFTS

Fueled by encouragement. Leaders are empowered and released for service, with a dependent but "can-do mentality." We must strive to spur one another on as leaders are unleashed for service within their areas of giftedness and passion (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11; Ephesians 4:11-13). There is a never-ending commitment to develop more leaders to replace those who depart or are sent out. See also John 15:5, 16; Acts 8:1-4; 13:1-4; Romans 12:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 2:9-10.

G. MISSIONAL LIVING - LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Driven by God's heart. We are passionate to live out and train others to know that God's heart is for none to perish, but that all would come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus, Paul and the Twelve Apostles are our examples. As leaders, may we seek to more faithfully follow their missional lives. May we demonstrate the same passion and faithfulness as we hold out God's heart to all those under our care, even if this involves hardship and suffering (2 Timothy 2:10). We are also convinced of the urgency of the mission we are called to serve (Mark 13:32-37; John 4:34-36; 9:4; 17:4) See also Matthew 9:37-10:42; Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-24; John 4:1-42; Acts 2:1-40; 10:23-48; 19:1-7.

H. MULTIPLICATION - CHURCH PLANTING CHURCHES

Dedicated to starting new churches. As leaders on Jesus' mission to make disciples we believe the best way the church fulfills its mission is through the intentional sending and starting of new churches. Every individual church, and local region of churches, seeks to plant new churches through sending teams of diversely gifted, and tested leaders, who have a heart to see many come to faith and healthy churches established. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 8:1-8; Acts 9:31; Acts 11:19-26; Acts 13:1-4, 48-49; Acts 14:19-28; Acts 16:4-5; Acts 18:22-23; Acts 19:1-10; Acts 20:27-28; Acts 28:30-31

Also note specific references to the locations of churches in New Testament letters: 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Revelation 2 and 3.

ARTICLE 9: ORDINANCES

A. General Statement

There are two ordinances of special significance that our Lord has commanded us to observe, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Neither of them has saving merit, nor is any grace imparted to the recipient through the water of Baptism or through the bread and the cup of the Supper. These ordinances are not means of 'special grace,'

but they are special 'means of grace' and powerful aids to the faith of the believers who participate in them.

B. Baptism

Only confessed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for Baptism (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 5:13, 14). Baptism in water is the God-ordained sign of one's personal union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and the door of entrance into the visible community of the people of God. We believe that immersion in water is the biblical mode of baptism and is the only mode to be administered by this church.

C. The Lord's Supper

Baptism is the initiatory ordinance by which one enters the visible church and should be observed while the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently by the assembled church (1 Corinthians 11:26). While this is a most holy ordinance and should be observed with joy and dignity, the bread and the cup of the Supper are and remain only symbols of the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. To maintain the purity of this ordinance, the elders will faithfully seek to ensure that only true believers are admitted to the Table.

ARTICLE 10: MEMBERSHIP

Please Note: There is another Crossway Policy Manual Template for churches that elect to function with formal church membership

A. **Becoming a part of [church name].** We do not have formal membership at [church name], but we do consider people to be a part of this local body when they have attended the [church name] Biblical Convictions class and are committed to the body of [church name] as evident in their involvement and service in church activities, such as small groups, serving, giving, participation in the Sunday gathering including the ordinance of communion.

B. **Church discipline.** God desires that individual believers live in a manner that seeks always to maintain the purity of His Church. The purpose of the discipline process is to restore the repentant professing believer and to maintain the purity of the church body, not to punish or to exclude that person. Dismissal from fellowship, if necessary, should happen according to the following conditions:

1. The believer's life and conduct are not in accordance with the scriptures in such a way that their witness hinders the ministry influence of the Church in the community.

2. The process for the dismissal of an unrepentant individual will be handled with care and sobriety and shall be according to Jesus' prescription in Matthew 18:15-17.

C. Restoration of Fellowship. An individual who was previously unrepentant and therefore dismissed by the elders shall be restored by the elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their lifestyles are observed to be repentant and in accordance with the scriptures.

ARTICLE 11: LEADERS

A. General Statement

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of His Church (Colossians 1:18). He has ordained that individual churches should be governed by Him through spiritual leaders whom He appoints, who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish His work. Christ has ordained that local churches are to be led by elders.

B. General Prerequisites

1. All elders of this church must be committed in service here.
2. Any individual set apart to one of these leadership positions must be able to wholeheartedly and conscientiously affirm his full agreement with the church's Statement of Faith and this Policy Manual. If an elder should at any time radically move from these doctrinal positions, he would be under spiritual and moral obligation to immediately declare such to his fellow elders in an orderly manner. Depending upon the doctrine involved and his strength of conviction his fellow elders may request his resignation as an elder and possibly seek dismissal from the church per **Article 11, D, Accountability and Removal of Elders**.
3. We acknowledge the valuable gifts which God has given women and the valuable service they may render to the church (Romans 16:1-6; Philippians 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:11). However, the Bible prohibits women from holding the office of an elder in the church (1 Corinthians 14:33b-35; 1 Timothy 2:8-15). Nevertheless, we acknowledge and encourage the valuable gifts and assistance of women in the formal instruction of children and other women (Titus 2:3-5), in the informal instruction even of men (1 Corinthians 11:5; Acts 18:26), and in the service to fellow saints (1 Timothy 3:11; 5:9-10).

C. Elders

Those who have been called of God to rule and teach in the church are called elders, pastors, or overseers. These are three interchangeable names designating one and the same office in a biblically functioning church (Acts 20:17, 28; Ephesians 4:11, 12; Titus 1:5, 7). In other words, elders together 'pastor' or shepherd the flock by exercising spiritual oversight over the flock by means of teaching, admonishing, nurturing, praying, and discipling.

1. Authority - Because the authority of the elders of the church is human authority exercised in the Church, it has both high prerogatives and important limitations:
 - a. It is divinely delegated authority. Thus, elders are answerable to God for the exercise of this authority (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). Therefore, elders are obligated to perform all of the duties specified by God in the Scriptures (particularly in such passages as Acts 20:17, 28ff; 1 Peter 5:1-4; and Hebrews 13:17).
 - b. The authority of elders is conditioned by the fact that they are themselves participants of the local church. While elders are shepherds over the flock, they are also participants of the flock. Therefore, each individual elder is entitled to the same privileges, is obligated by the same responsibilities, and is subject to the same discipline as are all the other participants of the church. Thus, each individual elder is both under the oversight of his fellow elders and is accountable to the church as a whole (Matthew 18:17; 23:9; 26:31; 2 Corinthians 11:19-20; Galatians 2:11; 3 John 1, 9-10).
 - c. We believe in the autonomy of the local church. We believe each church is to be led by a plurality of godly men who function as pastors (Acts 14:23, 1 Titus 1:5). We believe the role of pastor to be one and the same with the biblical terms overseer, elder, and bishop (see interchanging use of these terms to refer to a single role in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:1-4). Among the plurality of pastors, there is recognition of differing giftedness and abilities in leadership that may set some apart from others in function, but not in authority.
 - d. Finally, the authority of the elders is very real authority. God's people are, therefore, required to submit to their leadership when it is biblically exercised (Hebrews 13:17; note also the Scriptural titles and functions of the office).

2. Decisions of the Board of Elders.

- a. General Statement - Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration only by the unanimous or majority vote of the Board of Elders, as differentiated below, in a spirit of humility, each Elder regarding one another before himself. Therefore, in essence, whether the decision is one that necessitates a unanimous vote or a majority vote, the net result after all discussions are terminated and binding decisions have been made, the board must have a spirit of unanimity as to the direction the Church should take.
- b. Unanimity of all Elders required - Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling a member of the Vocational Staff, approving an Elder, Deacon, or Missionary (to be supported), or an amendment to or modification of the Constitution, a quorum as it pertains to the vote shall consist of all of the Board of Elders, whether voting in person or in abstentia (to be later confirmed in writing), and must be unanimous.
- c. Majority of all Elders required - All other decisions (other than those listed under the preceding unanimity paragraph), will be made on the basis of simple majority of Elders. Those Elders in the minority position, after being given an opportunity to defend their minority view from Scripture, will yield to the majority position of the Elder Board in the spirit of Philippians 2:3. This will thereby preserve the spirit of unanimity that the Elder Board must maintain to the Church congregation and the public, in general. Therefore, the minority Elder's must publicly support the decision of the majority of the Elder Board, in every situation.

The above decisions refer to major decisions that support and further the future mission and vision of [church name]. Pastor and ministry leaders have the delegated authority to make decisions that further the work of various ministries under their direction in accord with the guidelines approved for said ministries.

- d. Voting exclusions - Decisions by the Elder Board that pertain directly to any of the Elders, themselves (such as Church discipline or salary review, etc.), may be made (at the discretion of the majority of the other Elders) without the participation of the Elder in question (other than input required of him by the other Elders), in the discussions or the final decision of the Elders. Under no circumstances is any Elder allowed to influence other Elders or vote upon any issue involving him in a conflict of interest.

3. Duties

- a. One crucial aspect of the elders' duties is personally overseeing the flock of God.
- b. Subject to the limitations of this Policy Manual, all the activities and affairs of **[church name]** shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who are responsible for the shepherding and spiritual oversight of **[church name]**. Without prejudice to such general powers but subject to the same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Board of Elders shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers enumerated in this Policy Manual.
 - (1) To select and remove all vocational leaders, deacons, staff and employees of **[church name]**, prescribe such duties for them as may not be inconsistent with law, or with this Constitution, fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
 - (2) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of **[church name]**, as are required to fulfill its purposes, and generally to conduct, manage and control the activities and affairs of the Church and to make such rules and regulations therefore not inconsistent with law or with this Constitution, as they may deem best.
 - (3) To establish policies, positions and practices for **[church name]** consistent with the purposes of the church.

4. Plurality

Though a plurality of elders is the New Testament norm for every church, Scripture does not specify the number of elders each church should have, nor does it dictate the length of an elder's term of office. He is a gift of Christ to the church. Only when an elder fails to meet the necessary scriptural qualifications for his office does he disqualify himself from being an elder.

D. Accountability and Removal of Elders

1. General Statement - The Elders shall serve an indefinite term. Elder accountability is first and foremost unto God (1 Peter 5:1-5). It is mandatory, however, that the Elders must also be accountable to one another, at all times. Any Elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, relocates to a different area and church, becomes spiritually

unqualified, or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the Board of Elders.

2. Discipline of Elders - Any Elder may be disciplined according to Biblical principles, although no accusation against an Elder is to be taken seriously unless there are two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19). An Elder will be subject to scrutiny not only in the areas which might call for general Church discipline, but also as to his continued meeting of the Biblical qualifications for Eldership listed above. When an Elder ceases to meet those qualifications, he shall be asked by the Elders to step down for a time so that he may get his life in order in that area. Such a request by the other Elders shall be made only when they are in unanimous agreement. An Elder may also desire to be relieved from office either temporarily or permanently, if he feels unable to serve for any reason. The process of his possible reinstatement at a later date shall be governed by the attendant circumstances of his particular situation.

E. Deacons

1. The word for 'deacon' means 'servant.' As such, deacons play a crucial role in the life of a healthy church. Specifically, deacons provide 'any kind of service that supplies the need of another person.' Being subject to the elders, deacons serve in the capacity of assisting the Elders/Pastors (who are assigned spiritual oversight) with administrative responsibilities, business affairs, and practical care of the church body.
2. The number of deacons shall not be fixed. The church shall set apart, according to its need, individuals who evidence the scriptural qualifications for that office (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

F. Appointment of leaders

1. General Statement - The appointment of elders is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. However, He has ordained that each local church exercise the responsibility of recognizing those whom He is appointing to be elders in that particular church. Elders are appointed to office by the laying on of hands by the eldership (1 Timothy 4:14). This is an expression of approval for which the elders are responsible (1 Timothy 5:22). Therefore, each elder must have the support of the church body as well as the approval of the eldership. The Lord's appointment of an individual to this office is recognized by means of that individual's possession of those graces and gifts required by Scripture for elders and their own conviction that the Lord is calling them to minister in that leadership position. The recognition of elders is a matter of such importance

that it should never be dealt with devoid of much prayerful waiting upon God, an honest examination of the relevant passages of Scripture, and a frank evaluation of those who are being considered.

2. Calling - Anyone desiring the office of an elder must evidence to God's people the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications that are set forth in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1- 7; Titus 1:5-9).
3. Presentation - Since it is really God who makes men overseers by maturing them and burdening them with such a ministry, then it is the responsibility of the Church to recognize the men whom the Holy Spirit is appointing for pastoral function. The process of recognition will be as follows:
 - a. Evaluation - The Elder Board, by unanimous consent will decide whether the man suggested should be regarded as a true candidate for the office of Elder. In determining this, the Elders will contact the man himself in order to determine his assessment of God's will in this matter. If the man, under the Lord's conviction, desires the office, the Elder Board will then take an appropriate amount of time to get to know and evaluate the candidate.
 - b. Following this time for spiritual evaluation, the Elder-Board, by unanimous consent, may present the name of the candidate to the whole congregation for consideration. The body will be given the opportunity to express concerns or needed input to the Elders, personally.
 - c. After the Elders have acted upon the input of the congregation (if necessary), and if the Elders are in unanimous agreement that the individual has indeed been qualified by the grace of God for leadership within the Church, the Elders will approve what God has already done in the man's life by setting him apart as an elder at [church name]. Should the elders be unable to conscientiously appoint him as an elder (1 Timothy 5:22), they shall inform each member of their reasons in an appropriate manner.
 - d. Appointment - Following the recognition of an elder there shall be a portion of a regular worship service set aside at which time the new elder candidate shall be appointed by the laying on of the hands of the eldership. This solemn act should always be accompanied by the special prayers of the whole church (Acts 13:1-3). The laying on of the elders' hands shall signify their approval of an officer elect.

G. Support of Vocational Elders

The Bible teaches that those who shepherd the church through public teaching and preaching are worthy of full financial support (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Corinthians 9:1-14). There may also be bi-vocational and non-vocational elders who are

equal in authority, but whose role will not require full financial support. The eldership should prayerfully consider to what extent each individual elder should be financially supported by the church.

ARTICLE 12: POLICY MANUAL AUTHORITY

A. Nature

This document, as with any other non-inspired document, is not infallible. It does, however, reflect an earnest and sincere attempt to apply the Scriptures in ordering the life of this local church. Furthermore, we as members of this church, including the elders, have solemnly committed ourselves to follow this Policy Manual in ordering the life of this church (see the Preamble).

B. Amendments

The power to alter, amend or repeal this constitution and adopt new bylaws shall be vested in the Elders, and requires unanimous vote by the eldership.

ARTICLE 13: SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

In any dispute arising between [church name] participants, pastors, or general staff employees pertaining to any matters of the Church Bylaws (spiritual teaching, practices, policies or positions), staff counseling, Church finances, title to property purchased with Church contributions, or Church discipline, the dispute shall be resolved by the Board of Elders of the Church. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding one another before himself.

ARTICLE 14: CHURCH RECORDS AND REPORTS

A. Records

[Church name] shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records and accounts shall be kept at its principal location in the State of [enter state], or with the appropriate Elder.

B. Inspection of Books and Records

Every Elder shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect all books, records, documents of every kind, and the physical properties of [church name] and also of its subsidiary organizations, if any.

ARTICLE 15: OPERATION OF [CHURCH NAME]

[Church name] is elder led church, but the staff shall lead the operations of the church and manage its day-to-day function under the authority of the Elder/Pastor Board.

ARTICLE 16: DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION

The property of this Corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this Corporation will ever be used to benefit any officer or member of this Corporation, or to benefit any private individual. Upon dissolution of this Corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debt and obligations of the Corporation, the remaining assets will be distributed to the Crossway Network of Churches, a Colorado Non-Profit Corporation, organized and operating exclusively for charitable purposes.

ARTICLE 17: CHANGES TO THIS POLICY MANUAL

Additional articles or changes to the existing ones in this Policy Manual may be made at any meeting so designated by two-thirds of the Elder Board of [church name].

APPENDIX A – ARTICLE 6F, BIBLICAL CONVICTIONS, SPIRITUAL GIFTS - SPIRIT EMPOWERED AND BIBLICALLY GROUNDED

1. **[Church name]** recognizes that in the Scriptures there is a unique display of the miraculous associated with God's special servants, his apostles and prophets, and special events (Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:2-21; 10:44-48; 19:6). Also, contrary to what many would teach, biblical tongues are rare in the Scriptures, appearing only three times in the historical account of the first 30 years of the church (Acts 2:2-21; 10:44-48; 19:6) and once in the epistles (1 Corinthians 12-14). Also, in the limited four occasions for biblical tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46, 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12-14), it is a known language. Even though in the Bible, these are not normal daily affairs, we understand that God is free to empower whom he wants for what he wants when he wants. We desire all that God has for his people and are committed to the powerful expression of God's working through the giftedness and prayers of his people as outlined in the Bible. Although there is much to learn from many of our charismatic brothers and sisters, there is humble exception taken here with what is normative.
2. God the Spirit often works in uniquely powerful and repeated ways over the lifetime of a believer. Biblically, these are usually in times associated with unique service or renewed commitment (Acts 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9; Ephesians 5:18). In the last almost hundred years of the church, these special occasions are often linked with terminology that has become very confusing--"second blessing", or "baptism of the Spirit." For clarity, the Bible teaches there is only one baptism of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). The baptism of the Spirit takes place at salvation, where the Christian is indwelt (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19), sealed (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30), and adopted as God's child (Romans 8:9-18; Ephesians 1:5). Then subsequent to being born again or saved, there is a daily commitment to be filled, empowered, or yielded to the Spirit's control (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16, 17; Romans 12:1, 2).
3. Specifically with respect to the gift of tongues, the bible teaches that it is a supernatural enabling to speak in known languages that the individual does not know (Acts 2:2-21). There has been untold confusion in the misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:1 "tongues of angels" and 1 Corinthians 14:2-4 "For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men". From 1 Corinthians 14 many have developed a sincere practice of tongues that is a linking together of non-decipherable syllables for self-edification. This is not biblical tongues. In the Scriptures it is a divine enabling to speak in a known language, previously unknown to the speaker, which authenticated God's unmistakable outpouring of his grace

and Spirit (Acts 2:2-21; 10:44-48; 19:6). Many fail to understand the context of 1 Corinthians 14 and interpret the Apostle Paul's admonition against the misuse and practice of self-serving tongues to be an affirmation. The immediate context makes this clear (1 Corinthians 12:7; 13:1-13; 14:3, 12, 17-19, 25-28, 31-33, 40). In 1 Corinthians 12-14 there is further clarification that tongues are a sign to the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:20-25). Biblical tongues are not what is normative today in most churches or with most Christians who say they "speak in tongues." It is a divine enablement to speak in a language one did not previously know for God's glory.