

Memo

To: PCC Leadership

From: Board of Elders

Date: Original-November 21, 2001, Updated-August 2012, July 2017, February 2019, December 2023, July 2025

Major Doctrines, Doctrines with Scriptural Latitude, and Statements on Contemporary Cultural Issues

Introduction:

Evangelicals believe that there are certain controlling convictions, each of which is regarded as being true, of vital importance, and grounded in Scripture. These controlling convictions “set us apart” from all other religions and religious groups that do not hold to these same convictions. These controlling convictions are referred to as “major doctrines”.

There are other convictions where a substantial degree of latitude and diversity may be accepted within the evangelical community due to Scripture being silent or offering a variety of approaches. These other convictions are referred to as “doctrines with Scriptural latitude”. Perhaps God allows different evangelical groups to come to different conclusions in order to (a) minister to those special sheep God grants them, and (b) to keep us humble (i.e., since we cannot build a monolithic church in which everyone agrees on everything, we must humbly acknowledge that our understanding is finite, not exhaustive; genuine believers will not always see things the way we do). Our stated position on any of these areas of Scriptural latitude will not prohibit us from partnering with other churches or ministries that do not share our exact position.

Finally, there are still other convictions laid out in this document which are referred to as “statements on contemporary cultural issues”. These statements identify specific truths, which, despite being clearly taught in Scripture, have become increasingly questioned, challenged, or abandoned in our contemporary culture. New statements will be added as needed.

In “making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit”, PCC’s Board of Elders have devised an “officially held church position” on a number of doctrines which can be used to (a) screen leadership and teachers, and (b) provide for an official view of the church to be used by teachers, home group leaders, and in counseling. This paper is intended to supplement PCC’s constitution and other position papers and policies.

MAJOR DOCTRINES:

1. GOD (Article IV, Section A of Constitution)

- a. The God of the Bible is the one and only true God (Deut. 6:4, Ps. 97:7, Ps. 115:3, Isa. 44:6-8, Mark 12:28-32).
- b. He is the living God, one in essence, eternally existing in three distinct persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1-2, Matt. 28:19-20, John 1:1-2, Acts. 5:3-4).
- c. He is the creator and sustainer of all things (Gen. 1:1, John 1:3). He rules over everything, is sovereign over everything that happens, and He is constantly engaged with and governing his creation without being the author of evil (Gen. 3:14-17, Ezek. 12:28, James 1:13-14, 1 John 1:5, Rev. 17:14).

2. JESUS CHRIST (Article IV, Section C of Constitution)

- a. Jesus Christ is truly and fully God, having the same nature as the Father (John 1:1-3, 10:30, 14:7-11, 17:11, Rom. 1:1-4).
- b. He is also truly and fully man. (John. 1:14, Phil. 2:7, Gal. 4:4, Heb. 2:14-18).
- c. He was conceived and born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:20-23, Luke 1:30-31, 34-37).
- d. He lived a completely sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:21-22, Heb. 4:15).
- e. He rose from the dead after three days, in a renewed, physical resurrected body (Rom. 1:1-4, 1 Cor. 15:12-24).
- f. He is the one and only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

3. HOLY SPIRIT (Article IV, Section F of Constitution)

- a. The Holy Spirit is fully God, and is a personal being, as are the Father and the Son (John 15:26, 16:7-15, Rom. 8:9-11, 1 Cor. 2:10-11, Eph. 4:30, 1 Cor. 2:11).
- b. He directs and enables evangelistic efforts, and regenerates people (Acts 1:8, Acts 8:26,29, Titus 3:5, John 3:3-7).
- c. He permanently indwells and eternally secures all believers (Rom. 5:5, 8:9, 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, Eph. 1:13).
- d. He causes the believer to grow in the likeness of Christ, filling the believer with power to live a godly life and bear witness to Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:18).
- e. He gives spiritual gifts to all believers for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7-11, Eph. 4:11-12).

4. SCRIPTURE (Article IV, Section B of Constitution)

- a. The established canon of the Old and New Testaments includes 66 books¹ which are the inspired Word of the living God, which God wrote through human agents by the Holy Spirit (2 Sam. 23:2, Acts 28:25, 1 Cor. 2:12-13, 2 Tim. 3:16, Heb. 3:7, 10:15, 16, 2 Pet. 1:21).

¹ The Old Testament includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The New Testament includes Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

- b. These books are infallible and inerrant, as originally given (Ps. 19:7-9, Ps. 119:151,160, Matt. 5:17-18, John 17:17).
 - c. They are the final authority for our faith and practice (Isa. 8:20, Matt. 15:3-6, Acts 15:15, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Rev. 22:18).
- 5. MAN (Article IV, Section D of Constitution)
 - a. God created humanity after his own image to glorify Him. (Gen. 1:26-27, Isa. 43:7, 1 Cor. 10:31, Rom. 11:36)
 - b. He created us as distinct male and female in his image, equal before him as persons and distinct in our manhood and womanhood (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:18).
 - c. When Adam first sinned and fell, all humanity born through natural regeneration fell with him and thus inherited their sinful nature from him (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:6, Rom. 5:12-21, 1 Cor. 15:22).
 - d. All have sinned against God in thought, word and deed and continue to do so on a daily basis (Isa 64:6, Rom. 3:10-12, 3:22b-23, 5:12, 8:7, Eph. 4:18), and are justly deserving of God's eternal wrath and separation (Isa. 66:24, Matt. 13:50, 25:41, 2 Thess. 1:9, James 2:10, Rev. 14:9-11, 20:15, 21:8).
 - e. All need personal redemption from sin through the new birth (John 3:3, Rom. 3:22-26).
- 6. SIN (Article IV, Section D of Constitution)
 - a. Sin separates us from God (Is 59:2) both in this life and for all eternity (Isa. 66:24, Rom. 6:23, 2 Thess. 1:9). Sin also separates us from each other and has brought a curse on all creation and culture (Gen. 3, Ps. 2, Isa. 13:11, 1 John 5:19).
 - b. God hates sin (Gen. 6:5-7, Ps. 5:4-6, Heb. 12:28-29).
 - c. The penalty for sin is death (Rom. 6:23)
- 7. SALVATION (Article IV, Section E of Constitution)
 - a. God sent Jesus to redeem fallen creation and to save us from our sins by His life, death, resurrection, and ascended reign (Rom. 4:25, 5:8, Heb. 7:25).
 - b. God desires all people to be saved and to come to a saving knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:3-4).
 - c. Salvation is a free gift from God (Rom. 3:21-26).
 - d. It is received by faith in Jesus Christ alone. There is no work man can do on his own to obtain salvation. No amount of good works, kindness, charity, religious activity, etc can sufficiently meet God's holy and righteous standard (Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 3:27-28, 4:2-5, Heb. 11:6).
 - e. To obtain salvation a person must be born again by repenting and believing the Gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8)
 - f. Born again believers have been forgiven and have eternal life (John 3:16-18, 11:25-26a, Acts 3:19-20, 13:38-39) and will experience a future bodily resurrection like Christ's so they can dwell with him and his people in his new and restored creation forever (1 Cor. 15, Rev. 21-22).

- g. To repent and believe the Gospel means turning away from sin, and turning towards Jesus as your Savior and Lord. It is not merely an intellectual belief. (Prov. 28:13, Matt. 3:8, Luke 6:46, James 1:22)
8. HELL (Article IV, Section E of Constitution)
- a. Hell is a real place of eternal suffering. Those who are not saved will be justly imprisoned and punished there forever (Rev. 19:20, 20:10, 20:14-15).
 - b. Satan and his demons are real created beings. They are angels who rebelled against God, and who currently work in the world against the work of the Kingdom of God and His people (John 10:7-10, 1 Pet. 5:8, Rev. 12:7-9).
 - c. Although Satan and demons are real and powerful, they are in no way comparable to God, who is supreme in authority, sovereignty and might. The decisive battle against Satan's kingdom was won at the cross, and the day of his eternal fate is set and sealed, when God will cast him into the lake of fire and sulfur forever (Col. 2:15, Rev. 20:10).
9. RETURN OF CHRIST (Article IV, Section H of Constitution)
- a. Jesus will come back, in bodily form, and judge everyone who has ever lived. He will reward the righteous, punish the wicked, and complete the restoration of his creation (Dan. 7:21-22, John 5:22-23, Eph. 1:10, Jude 14-15, Rev. 20:11-15).
10. BELIEVER'S POSITION AND IDENTITY (Article IV, Section G of Constitution)
- a. A believer is no longer a child of wrath, but is born into God's family and given Christ's nature. A believer has a changed nature through regeneration by the Holy Spirit (John 1:13, 3:1-8, 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15, Eph. 2:10, 4:24, James 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23, 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:4, 18).
 - b. A believer is no longer a child of the world but is given the position and identity of a beloved child of God through adoption into God's family (Rom. 8:14-17, Gal. 4:1-7, Eph. 1:3-6, 1 John 3:1).
 - c. A believer is no longer a sinner in God's sight because he has been given the righteousness of Jesus Christ through imputation. A believer has a changed standing and is forever justified (Luke 18:14, Rom. 3:24, 4:25, 1 Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:7).
 - d. A believer is no longer defiled and unclean but is now separated and holy unto God in Christ Jesus. Although perfection in this life is impossible and growth in holiness will vary from person to person, increasing at varying degrees in each person, the believer has a changed character. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, he will be sanctified by a life-long battle of putting the flesh to death and walking in a newness of life (Acts 26:18, Rom. 8:1-17, 1 Pet. 1:2, Lev. 11:44, 1 Thess. 4:3, 5:23, 2 Cor. 3:17, Col. 3).
 - e. A believer is no longer God's enemy, but now has peace with Him, and is His friend. A believer has a changed relationship with God and is forever reconciled to Him (John 15:13-15, Rom. 5:1, 8:1, 2 Cor. 5:17-21, Col. 1:20, James 2:23).

- f. A believer is no longer alone but is now a member of Christ's body. While the body has many members, they are united and one in Christ (Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 1:2, 12:12-31). Believers therefore experience a spiritual union with every other believer throughout the world and they commit to live out their faith together in local churches (Heb. 10:25, 13:17, 1 Pet. 5:1-2, Rev. 1:4).
- g. A church is a community of believers who recognize and encourage each other in the faith through the faithful practice of the sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Table), loving discipleship of one another, and evangelism to the world (Acts 2:42, Eph. 2:20-22, Col. 3:16, Rom. 12:5, Heb. 10:24-25, 1 Cor. 12:13).

DOCTRINES WITH SCRIPTURAL LATITUDE:

1. BAPTISM (Article II, Section B, Para. 11 of Constitution)
 - a. Baptism is not essential for salvation.
 - b. PCC will show tolerance toward an individual's mode of Baptism, not making this an issue for either fellowship or membership.
 - c. PCC will practice believers baptism and immersion.
2. CREATION ORDER
 - a. One's stance on the age of the earth is not something that is essential to salvation.
 - b. PCC will tolerate both new and old earth views.
3. CHARISMATIC GIFTS
 - a. No gift mentioned in Scripture has necessarily ceased (1 Cor. 14:39, 1 Thess. 5:19-20).
 - b. Gifts are given as the Son deems necessary for the building up and outreach ministry of the Church (1 Cor. 12:7, Eph. 4:11-16).
 - c. Gifts are to be used for the edification of the Church (1 Tim. 3:5, 1 Cor. 14, 1 Thess. 5:21-23, 1 Pet. 4:10).
 - d. No gift should be used in such a way as to relegate Scripture to a secondary authority in the life of the Church (1 Cor. 14:29, 1 Thess. 5:21-22, Acts 20:32).
 - e. There is no distinct, normative, second blessing "second work of grace" or "baptism of the Holy Spirit" in which the Spirit for the first time fills and empowers the believer.
 - f. Tongues are no more a gift for every believer than any other spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:30).
 - g. While PCC does not incorporate tongues and related utterances into official gatherings and public worship, it will try to create a climate of Christian fellowship and worship that will welcome both those who speak in tongues and those that do not.

4. END TIMES (ESCHATOLOGY)
 - a. The purpose of history, where it is headed (new heaven and a new earth, all to the glory of God, as He establishes His Son as head over everything) must not be disputed.
 - b. PCC will show tolerance toward views on timing and order of historical events.

5. PREDESTINATION/FREE WILL—While Scripture makes it clear that God predestines (Ephesians 1) there is mystery surrounding how He predestines and yet calls on men everywhere to make a personal response to the Gospel, to the general gospel call. While only those who have the specific call of God (like Lazarus coming out of the tomb) will be able to respond to the general call, all are held responsible for rejecting the general call. Such a position is the only one that can keep the “free will/sovereignty of God tensions” intact. We must deny either pole if we want to remain biblical.

6. CHURCH GOVERNMENT—PCC has adopted an elder rule form of government, because we believe it is the closest to the biblical model. However, other forms (e.g., congregational and/or bishop led) could be argued from Scripture.

7. WORSHIP—There is nothing more important in life than worship. We all worship something or someone. The question is whether we will worship the right One in ways that bring him glory. There are two different aspects of worship that are designed to complement each other. There is all-of-life worship and gathered worship. All-of-life worship includes everything we do as an act of worship to our God (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:31). Gathered worship is what happens when God’s people meet together around his Word in the form of local churches for special set-apart times of devotion to God. At PCC, this primarily happens weekly on Sundays and occasionally on other days throughout the year. We want our gathered worship on Sunday to inspire and instruct our all-of-life worship Monday through Saturday. To gather regularly with God’s people around his authoritative Word and in celebration of Jesus’ resurrection is both a solemn duty and a joyful privilege. The following is a brief summary of principles that guide our gathered worship and our all-of-life worship.

Gathered Worship

 - a. Glory to God: Worship is ultimately for him. He is the most important audience at every service. Gathered worship is meant to be an anticipation of the heavenly gathering of God’s people. The grand scenes of heavenly worship in Revelation are both present and future. We too should direct all our attention to the throne. We too should sing of Christ’s work. We too should be earnest and uncompromising in our devotion to God. Our weekly gatherings—whether small or large, beautiful, or forgettable—are meant to be a sweet foretaste of the heavenly worship we will one day experience for ages unending.
 - b. Focused on the Gospel of Christ: The gospel—Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection— is what makes worship possible. The gospel is what we proclaim in worship. The gospel is what we sing in worship. The gospel is what calls a people together in worship, inspires a people to praise in worship, and sends a

people out in a life of worship. Every Sunday is another opportunity to sing about the cross, glory in our Redeemer, and marvel at the good news that is Christ for us and in us. Jesus Christ is at the center of all biblical thinking about worship. He is the mediator between God and man. His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross is the propitiation for our sins. He is the procurer of salvation and blessing for the nations. He is the new temple in which and around which all true believers gather. Christ draws us to himself in worship and through him a new relationship with the Father is made possible. While our gathered worship is not specifically focused on unbelievers (as if they were the audience we need to please most), our focus on Christ means that we certainly want the gospel presented credibly and intelligently to non-Christians. We are privileged to have new guests every Sunday, some of whom are not Christians. One of our prayers each week is that unbelievers would hear Christ's call to faith and repentance, and that God would seek and save those who are lost.

- c. Biblical: The whole service is centered around God's Word. Therefore, the prayers, the songs, and the preaching—must be biblical. In gathered worship we read the Bible, preach the Bible, pray the Bible, sing the Bible, and see the Bible made visible in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Table. Every element in the service must be evaluated based on God's revelation in the Scriptures: are we singing, saying, and hearing what is true?
- d. Edifying to God's people: Gathered worship is set apart from all-of-life worship in its focus on edification. Because of this focus, there are many activities that are appropriate for the Christian in all of life that aren't appropriate in a worship service. There are many art forms that can be practiced and performed to the glory of God which would nevertheless not be suitable for gathered worship. Paul's principle in 1 Corinthians 14 is that gathered worship must strive for maximum shared intelligibility.
- e. Emphasizing the ordinary means of grace: God can work in many ways, but he has committed to being with us and transforming us through certain "means of grace." He communes with us through prayer, through the Word, and through the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Table. Our services emphasize these ordinary means whereby God promises to give us more grace. We come to worship to give God glory, but even more so to meet with him and receive a blessing from his hand (Num. 6:24-26). The central act in the worship service is the preaching of God's Word. We believe this is best accomplished through the careful, Spirit-filled exposition of Scripture. No matter the approach, every sermon should flow manifestly from Scripture and proclaim the gospel of God. Through all this, we hope that every worshiper will want to cry out, "Surely the Lord is in this place" (Gen. 28:16).
- f. Congregational Singing: We believe that when we sing, our words can be directed both to God and to one another (Eph. 5:17-20). We believe there are new songs to be sung to God (Ps. 96:1). We also believe there is a great heritage of church music that we should embrace. Our services use music from different genres and different centuries presented in contemporary styles that encourage

congregational singing. We use a variety of instruments, everything from guitars and drums to cellos and pianos. In all this, the most important sound is that of the congregation singing.

- g. Casual Liturgy: Almost every church has an order of service and a familiar pattern of doing things, which means almost every church has a liturgy. Even though we wear our liturgy lightly and adjust it as needed, we still want it to be rich and orderly. Our services include various elements including calls to worship, corporate singing, ministry reports, prayer, scripture readings, corporate confessions and assurances of pardon, collection of tithes and offerings, pastoral announcements, preaching of the Word and the participation in and observance of Baptism and the Lord's Table. Our services do not look the same every week, but neither are we trying to invent something new every Sunday.
- h. Celebratory: The regular gathering of God's people for worship should be joyful. With the cares of the world that individuals constantly face each week, the gathered worship of God's people should be a time when we remind ourselves and one another that our Lord Jesus is risen, on His throne and is coming back to redeem and restore all things. This doesn't mean that we ignore the tough realities that many are facing. Instead, our gathered worship helps us to find joy in our relationship with God so that we can proclaim, "blessed be the name of the Lord" in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.
- i. Prayerful: Our services include different prayers. Often the worship leader will lead a time of prayer focused on the content of one of the songs just sung. Other prayers are common too: a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication for the ministry focused on during the ministry report and for the tithes and offerings being given, a prayer of illumination before the sermon, and a brief prayer after the sermon. We also have times of prayer before our gathered worship as well as times of prayer for the needs of our church body locally and globally on Sunday mornings and during the week.
- j. Undistracting Excellence: In gathered worship, the focus should be on the gospel and the all-surpassing glory of Jesus Christ. Because doing things decently and in order is helpful to others and pleasing to God, we should seek to "do worship" with excellence (1 Cor. 14:40). But it must be undistracting excellence. The goal is to lead in such a way that we are neither so clumsy nor so clever that we draw attention away from the glory of God.

All-of-Life Worship

- a. Because the Christian life is not dualistic (separated into sacred and secular spheres), God is a part of all that we do. Therefore, we should treat our relationships, our work, our recreation, our daily mundane tasks and our every thought and deed as expressions of worship (1 Cor. 10:31).
- b. God created and enjoys the fine arts. Therefore we, too, should enjoy them and employ them in ministering the Gospel in our all-of-life worship (Isa. 60, Col. 1:16, Rom. 11:36).
- c. People should not violate their own consciences when experiencing art. If a person believes it would violate their conscience and therefore be sinful to

experience a particular presentation, then they should not attend and not be forced to. Neither should a Christian participate in an artistic event in a way that will cause weaker Christians to stumble (Rom. 14:21).

8. GENDER ROLES IN MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH— PCC is committed in belief and practice to a complementarian view of gender roles in marriage and in the church. The intention with the word “complementarian” is to locate our way of life between two kinds of error: on the one side would be the abuses of women under male domination, and on the other side would be the negation of gender differences where they have beautiful significance. Which means that, on the one hand, we as complementarians acknowledge and lament the history of abuses of women personally and systemically, and the present evils globally and locally in the exploitation and diminishing of women and girls. And, on the other hand, we lament the contemporary cultural impulse to minimize God-given differences between men and women and dismantle the order God has designed for the flourishing of our lives together. So, as complementarians we resist the impulses of a chauvinistic, dominating, and abusive culture, on the one side, and the impulses of a sex-blind, gender-leveling, unisex culture, on the other side. And we take our stand between these two ways of life not because the middle ground is a safe place (which it is emphatically not), but because we think this is the good plan of God in the Bible for men and women. “Very good,” as he said in Genesis 1. The Biblical principles of complementarianism and how they are practiced at PCC are detailed in the following:
- a. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:18).
 - b. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen. 2:18, 21-24, 1 Cor. 11:7-9, 1 Tim. 2:12-14).
 - c. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen. 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13, 1 Cor. 11:7-9). Eve was created to be a strong helper (*ezer*) for Adam (Gen. 2:18). *Ezer* is used 21 times in the OT alone, 16 of which are descriptions of God himself (Ps. 54:4, 118:7). God's role as *ezer* gives needed perspective. Since God is the ultimate example of what it means to be a strong helper (Heb. 13:6), He demonstrates how it is a high and worthy calling.
 - d. The complementary roles of men and women in both marriage and the church reflect the mystery of diversity within our Triune God. In marriage, both husbands and wives look to Jesus as their example. Husbands live out the role of Christ as the sacrificial and sanctifying head of the church (Eph. 5:25-33, 1 Cor. 11:3). Wives live out the role of Christ as submissive Son of the Father, submitting to the husband as the church submits to Christ, its head (Phil. 2:1-11, Eph. 5:22-24). Because God is the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3), headship does not indicate superiority; rather, the Father and the Son are equal and thus submission is voluntary. The voluntary, though commanded, nature of a woman's submission reflects the beauty of the Gospel, in which the ultimate act of Christ's submission even unto death on a cross (Phil. 2:8) accomplished

salvation for God's people. In the church, both men and women submit to one another and to the leadership of the church (Eph. 5:21, Heb. 13:7).

- e. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen. 3:1-7, 12, 16). In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
- f. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:18, Gal. 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18, Eph. 5:21-33, Col. 3:18-19, 1 Tim. 2:11-15).
- g. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph. 5:21-33, Col. 3:18-19, Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation (Gal. 3:26-29) and an equal mandate to use all their gifts to build up the body of Christ (Acts 1:14, 1 Cor. 14:12). We see various examples in the New Testament of women using their gifts to build up the body of Christ. Some of those examples include women engaging in evangelism (John 4:39), discipleship (Titus 2:3-5), teaching (Acts 18:24-26), prophesy (Acts 21:7-9, 1 Cor. 11:5), praying and prophesying in the gathered worship service (1 Cor. 11:5), and leadership (Rom. 16:1-16). Therefore, both women, as well as men, are pursued and encouraged to exercise their gifts for the edification of the body of Christ under the leadership and eager oversight of the elders and pastors so that in all things Christ may be glorified. Nevertheless, some governing/teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (1 Cor. 14:33-38, 1 Tim. 2:11-12, 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9). At PCC, these include the roles of Pastor, Elder, and Home Group Leader due to the authoritative teaching that each role requires.
- h. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan. 3:10-18, Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29, 1 Pet. 3:1-2).
- i. In both men and women, a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim. 2:11-15, 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
- j. Our complementarian beliefs and practices will not prohibit us from partnering with other churches and ministries that subscribe to other views.

9. MARRIAGE, DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

- a. Marriage unites one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment to each other through public vows that are made before God and others (Gen. 2:23-24, Matt. 19:4-6). Marriage provides for intimate companionship, pure sexual expression, procreation, and reflects the relationship of Christ and the church (Gen. 1:28, 2:25, Prov. 5:15-19, 1 Cor. 7:1-5, Eph. 5:31-33).
- b. A husband is commanded to love his wife as Christ loved the church by giving himself up for her and a wife is commanded to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:22-33).
- c. Marriage is a common grace gift from God to all people regardless of their beliefs. Believers, however, are commanded not to be unevenly yoked. Therefore, believers should only marry fellow believers (1 Cor. 7:39, 2 Cor. 6:14). However, if married to a non-believer, a believer should honor their marriage covenant in hopes that the unbelieving spouse will come to faith (1 Cor. 7:12-16, 1 Pet. 3:1-2).
- d. Divorce is an official and public dissolution of the marriage covenant. God is greatly grieved when marriages end in divorce, however due to the hardness of our hearts, God has revealed in his word a limited number of circumstances when divorce is permissible (Mal. 2:13-16, Matt. 19:4-9, Rom. 7:1-3, 1 Cor. 7:39).
- e. While there are cases when divorce is permitted, if godly reconciliation is possible, it should be pursued.
- f. Divorce is permitted in the case of desertion by an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:15). This occurs when a spouse is unwilling to live with a believer within a Christian understanding of marriage.
 - i. Desertion by an unbeliever is not limited to a literal geographic desertion but could also include abusive actions which endanger the life and wellbeing of the spouse and/or children. In such cases, physical separation for the purpose of removing oneself or children from danger is warranted. While physical abuse may be easier to identify, emotional abuse or oppression is characterized by a pattern of coercive, controlling, and punishing behaviors whereby one spouse seeks to control and dominate the other. While the principle of desertion is clear, the application of this principle can be difficult in some cases and requires the patient and humble counsel and investigation of the plurality of elders to discern if unrepentant desertion has occurred. It is our practice that this process will include calling the offender to repentance and inviting male and female helpers to aid and counsel those individuals in dispute.
- g. Divorce is permitted in the case of adultery (Matt. 5:31-32, 19:3-9, Deut. 24:1-4).
 - i. Adultery refers to sexual infidelity or a violation of the exclusive sexual intimacy that exists between a husband and wife in the marriage covenant. Again, while the principle of adultery is clear, the application of the principle can be difficult in some cases and requires the patient and humble counsel and investigation of the plurality of elders to discern if

adultery has occurred. It is our practice that this process will include male and female advocates to aid and counsel those individuals in dispute.

- h. Remarriage is permissible when:
 - i. A spouse dies (Rom. 7:2-3, 1 Cor. 7:39).
 - ii. A marriage ended because the former spouse was an unbeliever who deserted the believing spouse and would not agree to reconciliation (1 Cor. 7:15).
 - iii. A marriage ended because the former spouse was guilty of adultery (Matt. 5:32, 19:9).
 - iv. If a marriage ended without Biblical grounds for divorce, but the former spouse has already remarried *and* the individual in question is repentant for their role in the divorce, then they may remarry.
- i. If none of the previously stated qualifications are met, then the divorced believer should remain unmarried and patiently pursue reconciliation until God provides reconciliation with the former spouse (1 Cor. 7:11).
- j. While divorce is always a result of sin, the divorce itself is not always sinful for both parties involved. Based on the two permissions, there are situations in which a person can be an innocent party in a divorce. This does not refer to an absolute innocence, but a relative innocence in the final point of dispute. Being an innocent party does not mean that one is innocent of all sin leading up to that point. For example, consider a man who commits adultery after his wife has intentionally been emotionally and physically distant. Though her sin is real, it does not excuse his marital unfaithfulness.
- k. Neither a divorce nor a divorce and remarriage should automatically disqualify a believer from positions of service or leadership in the life of the church. If the believer was an innocent party in their divorce or if they were the guilty party but have confessed and repented of their sin and sufficiently demonstrated fruit in keeping with repentance, then they should not be automatically restricted from using their gifts to serve in ways that will build up and edify the body of Christ.
- l. In all these matters, the believer is encouraged to cling to God's promises given to those who are repentant and are seeking to follow his will. They are encouraged to seek the counsel of the Elders in how to live out their repentance with freedom and joy.

10. CHURCH AND STATE

- a. Christ and Caesar: Christ Jesus is Lord and king over all nations of the earth, reigning supreme over all political powers. Christ's teaching to "give to Caesar the things that are Caesars and to God the things that are Gods" does not infer that there are two kingdoms (one belonging to God and the other belonging to the secular order). There is one kingdom in which God is sovereign. He permits the state to operate in limited ways according to his divine purposes (Mark 12:17, Ps. 103:19, 1 Cor. 15:25-26, Prov. 21:1, Jer. 10:6-7, Rom. 13:1-3, Ps. 2:1-2).

- b. The proper role of the state: Governments, as God's guardians of the present age, have the right to use the physical sword to protect and advance the well-being of their citizens. The state is meant to be an agent of justice, prosperity, and peace. The state has no right to establish the church, dictate doctrine, compel worship, or determine who or who is not saved (Rom. 13:1).
- c. The proper role of the church: The church has not been given the physical sword in her mission, but instead uses the power of the Gospel to grow His kingdom. We reject the view that the Church has a right to use the state to compel belief or to grant special privileges to the church not available to those of other faiths. The church may choose the path of civil disobedience in cases when the state oversteps its bounds and violates God's laws (Matt. 28:19-20, Matt. 16:18-19, Acts 5:29).
- d. Politics in light of God's kingdom: Due to Jesus' kingship, we renounce the earthly impulse to pursue power and control through political means. Governments and nations are being prepared for the new creation, and transformed by the Gospel's pervasive impact on our lives and broader society. We affirm that Christians are acting politically when they faithfully love God and love people. We reject the dismissal of these political actions as irrelevant, or ineffective, but insist that lives driven by the Gospel are the best hope for our nation and world (Mark 12:29-31, Eph. 4:25-5:1).
- e. Civic Engagement: We affirm the right of individual Christians to follow their conscience and support the political candidates and parties of their choice, as part of God-honoring civic involvement. We deny that there is any one party or candidate that all Christians should support in any given election. We affirm prayer for all parties and candidates (without endorsing any) and reject the condemnation of any party or candidate as irredeemably evil. Such condemnation is inconsistent with the gospel and the sovereignty of God who turns the hearts of even defiant rulers to do his will. Our posture as we work for political change must be neither withdrawal nor domination but a faithful representation of our Lord and his will. We must also avoid the unfaithful postures of either despair or triumphalism when it comes to political events in our nation or world. This does not preclude the need for the church to be a prophetic voice calling for justice and a return to God's norms for the state (Matt. 5:14-16, Acts 5:29).
- f. Summary: We affirm that the church of Christ is primarily an embassy of the kingdom in the midst of the sometimes defiant and sometimes cooperative kingdoms of this world. As faithful ambassadors we must practice a faithful presence now and work for the good of the nation within which we find ourselves. Our primary political actions are the display of divine love, gospel faith, and kingdom hope. These three powers can transform political life and help heal the wounds and fractures in the wider society (Jer. 29:7).

11. RACE AND ETHNICITY

- a. The Image of God: God created every human in his image with equal worth in his sight (Gen. 1:26–27, 5:1–2, 9:6, James 3:9). When humans treat other humans unjustly, it is an offense to the God in whose image we are made. God does not show partiality or favoritism (Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7, Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11, Gal. 2:6, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:25, 1 Pet. 1:17), nor should we (Prov. 18:5, 24:23, 28:21, James 2:1–13, Jude 16). Therefore, ethnic partiality is sinful.
- b. Race: We all share one race—the human race. We share the same bloodline. We all have the same original parents, Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:20, 5:1–2, Acts 17:26). The modern category of race does not align with what the Bible says about humans. According to contemporary usage, race is primarily physical or biological—focusing, for example, on skin color, facial features, and hair texture. The category of ethnicity matches more closely what the Bible says about humans. Ethnicity is primarily cultural—that is, it includes shared physical characteristics and ancestry but also includes characteristics such as culture, language, and geopolitics. We acknowledge that it is important to understand the role that the term race has played in our nation’s history and throughout the world. The concept of race is part of a painful past; it is a social construct that has been used in the service of oppression with ongoing implications of superiority and inferiority. Christians should not uphold divisions along racial or ethnic lines. Racism is sinful because it dishonors God by exhibiting an explicit or implicit attitude, belief, or practice that values one race over other races.
- c. People Groups: God’s global plan to save sinners includes people from every ethnic group (Gen. 12:1–3, Matt. 28:18–20, Acts 10:9–43, Rom. 1:5, Gal. 2:11–16, 3:8, 14, 16, 28–29, Col. 3:11, Rev. 5:9, 7:9, 14:6)—both Jews and Gentiles (Gen. 12:1–3, Deut. 7:6–8, Matt. 28:18–20, Gal. 3:8, 14, 16, 28–29, Col. 3:11). No single people group has more value in God’s sight than another. We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.
- d. Interethnic Marriage: God approves of interethnic marriage (Num. 12, Ruth 4:13–22). Opposing the concept of interethnic marriage manifests deep-rooted ethnic partiality. However, God does oppose entering into an interfaith marriage—that is, marriage between a believer and an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:39, 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1).
- e. Our Neighbors: We must love our neighbors across ethnic lines—even when such love is countercultural, costly, and inconvenient (Luke 10:25–37). Ethnic groups should not perpetuate antagonistic us-versus-them relations.
- f. Church Unity: The church must maintain the unity (including ethnic harmony) that Christ powerfully created (Eph. 2:11–3:6, 4:1–6, Col. 3:11). God’s calling on all Christians to love one another as Christ loved us by means of kindness, forgiveness, and humble self-sacrifice (1 Cor. 12:12–26, Eph. 4:32, Phil. 2:1–8, Col. 3:12–15). There is no self-defining characteristic that is more significant than our identity in Christ.

- g. Ethnic Diversity in the Church: The church should prize and welcome the ethnic harmony that Jesus purchased with his blood because it glorifies God. That being said, ethnic diversity should not be an end in itself that we pursue at any cost. We should not treasure diversity above biblical fidelity or sound doctrine.
- h. Justice: The church must love and do justice, which entails treating all peoples from all ethnicities justly and encouraging its members to pursue justice in society. Justice is making righteous judgments according to the standard of God's righteousness (1 Kings 3:28, Prov. 29:4). We recognize that individuals and groups with power have often exploited the vulnerable for their own gain (Ex. 1:5–14, James 5:1–6) and that sinners can create unjust systems (Est. 3:7–14, Ps. 94:20–21, Isa. 10:1–2). We should examine suspected examples of systemic injustice on their own merits, seeking to destroy ungodly strongholds and taking every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4–5). Although worldly systems of thought can make accurate observations, we must be careful not to be captured by systems of thought that view relationships primarily through the lens of power—that is, those with more power are inherently oppressors, and those with less power are inherently oppressed (Col. 2:8). Any person of any ethnicity can be guilty of showing ethnic partiality (Acts 6:1, James 2:1–13) regardless of whether they are part of a group that holds power or not.
- i. Summary: We lament that many people have experienced the painful effects of ethnic partiality and injustice. We are all broken people, and we all stumble in many ways (James 3:2). Thankfully, we serve a Savior who pours out his grace and mercy on all those who repent of their sin and turn to him in faith, and he empowers us to love others with the love that he has shown us (1 John 4:7). By God's grace, we are to pursue ethnic harmony in the church and in the world for his glory and for the good of humanity. Full harmony can only be achieved through Jesus. He himself is our peace. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile and made the two into one new man (Eph. 2:14–15). With his blood, he has purchased unity for us. He has ransomed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev. 5:9). In him, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for all believers are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:27–29). Only in Christ can we experience such unity in beautiful diversity.

12. ALCOHOL & OTHER ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES

- a. Scripture teaches that beverages containing alcohol can be a blessing, but it also indicates various circumstances when alcohol consumption is sinful. For example, God's Word addresses alcohol positively in the following ways:
 - i. Wine is identified as part of God's good provision (Ps. 104:14–15, Hos. 2:8).
 - ii. Wine is a symbol of the blessing and favor of God (Amos 9:13–14, Prov. 3:9–10, Eccl. 9:7)
 - iii. God commanded that wine be given as an offering to him (Gen. 35:14, Exod. 29:40, Num. 15:4–6).

- iv. In the New Heavens and the New Earth God will serve us wine (Isa. 25:6).
- v. Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:1-11).
- vi. Jesus drank wine (Matt. 11:19).
- vii. Jesus served wine to his disciples (Matt. 26:27-29, Mark 14:23-25, Luke 22:17-18).
- viii. Paul told Timothy to drink wine (1 Tim. 5:23).
- b. Scripture also indicates that there are various circumstances when alcohol consumption is sinful.
 - i. It is sinful to drink alcohol when it leads to drunkenness (1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:13-24, Eph. 5:18).
 - ii. It is sinful to drink alcohol, even in moderation, if it violates the laws of the state (Rom. 13:1-2).
 - iii. It is sinful to drink alcohol, even in moderation, if it is done with unloving disregard for how it may cause others to stumble (Rom. 14:13, 1 Cor. 8:9-13, 9:12). This does not prohibit public alcohol consumption because Jesus served and drank wine in public settings (John 2:1-11, Luke 7:33-34).
 - iv. It is sinful to drink alcohol, even in moderation, if it violates your conscience (Rom. 14:14). Due to personal conviction, family history, or various other reasons, consuming alcohol may violate your conscience. If so, abstinence is the right choice.
 - v. It is sinful to drink alcohol, even in moderation, if you do so out of spiritual pride or license (Rom. 14:3-4).
 - vi. It is sinful to drink alcohol, even in moderation, if you have taken a vow or signed a contract, agreeing not to (Col. 3:9-10, Eph. 4:25, Matt. 5:33-37, Acts 18:18). If you tell your parents, your spouse, your friends, your employer, or your school that you won't drink alcohol, then it is wrong for you to drink alcohol.
 - vii. It is sinful to drink alcohol, even in moderation, if you are reliant upon it (1 Cor. 6:12, Prov. 20:1, 21:17, Ps. 121:1-2, 2 Tim. 1:17).
- c. Therefore, those who drink alcohol must consider its effects on themselves and on others. Abstinence from alcohol may be an appropriate moral response in particular situations, but it is not required for all by Scripture and therefore should not be demanded by the church.
- d. Out of loving sensitivity for those who may struggle with alcohol abuse and because we share our facility with a school and other ministries, alcohol may not be consumed on our church property. While alcohol consumption is permitted at PCC-affiliated off-site events, like Home Groups and other social gatherings, it should be done in alignment with the guidance provided here. As a church, we will not promote gatherings where alcohol is a primary focus (e.g. wine tastings, etc.).
- e. While the Bible does not explicitly mention the use of other mind-altering or addictive substances, many of these same principles apply. Some of these

substances are so dangerous and addictive that there is no way for them to be used to God's glory.

- f. The church should provide pastoral care and guidance for those struggling with addiction and support for their families. We are all sinners and sufferers, and so, while we acknowledge the biological and psychological power of addiction, we do not believe that such factors completely absolve someone of agency or culpability for their actions. Therefore, pastoral care and guidance for a person who is addicted to a substance should be patient and gracious but may require intervention and church discipline in some cases (Titus 2:11-13, Prov. 23:29-35, Eph. 5:18, Gal. 5:19-21, 6:1).

STATEMENTS ON CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL ISSUES:

1. SANCTITY AND DIGNITY OF ALL HUMAN LIFE

- a. All human life bears the very image of God, the Imago Dei (Gen. 1:27), and is therefore sacred from conception until natural death.
- b. Inherent to the idea of loving your neighbor (Matt. 22:36-40) is a robust understanding of the dignity of all human life. This includes not only the family next door, but also preborn children (Ps. 139:13-16), disabled individuals (Lev. 19:14, John 9:2-3, Matt. 25:40), the elderly (Lev. 19:32), victims of trafficking (Isa. 58:6), those trapped in poverty (Ps. 41:1), the immigrant and exile among us (Lev. 19:33-34), women and men (Gen. 1:27), and those of every nation, tribe, people, and language (Rev. 7:9).
- c. Abortion, physician-assisted suicide, and euthanasia are prohibited by the sixth commandment (Ex. 20:13) because human life is a gift from God and belongs to God.

2. SEXUALITY

- a. God created humanity as male and female in his image. Heterosexuality is God's revealed will for humankind. A chaste and faithful expression of this orientation (whether in singleness or in marriage) is the ideal to which God calls all people. Sexual relations between a man and a woman within the boundaries of marriage are good for both pleasure and procreation (Gen. 1:27, 2:18-25, 1 Cor. 7:1-7).
- b. Every person has been affected by the fall of humanity into a sinful condition. Same-sex attraction is a result of the fall. Whatever biological or familial roots of same-sex attraction may be discovered, we do not believe that these would sanction or excuse homosexual behavior, though they would deepen our compassion and patience for those who are struggling to be free from said sexual temptations (Rom. 1:21-27, James 1:13-15).
- c. There is hope for the person with a same-sex attraction in that Jesus Christ offers a healing alternative in which the power of sin is broken and the person is freed to know and experience his or her true identity in Christ and in the fellowship of his Church (1 Cor. 6:9-11, 2 Cor. 5:16-21).
- d. This freedom is attained through a process which includes recognizing homosexual behavior as sin, renouncing the practice of homosexual behavior, rediscovering healthy, non-erotic friendships with people of the same sex,

embracing a God honoring identity, and in the age to come, rising from the dead with a new body free from every sinful impulse. This process parallels the similar process of sanctification needed in dealing with heterosexual temptations as well. We believe that this freedom comes through faith in Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit (Col. 3:1-5, 1 Thess. 4:1-8, 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

- e. Gender dysphoria is when a person does not feel right in the gender that God has given them. It is a result of the fall of humanity into a sinful condition that pervades every person. God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's biological sex by any intervention or by embracing a transgender identity (Gen. 1:27, 2:18-22, Deut. 22:5, Lev. 18:22, Rom. 1:26-27, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 11:14-15).
- f. As a result of the fall, there are rare cases in which individuals are born with a physical disorder related to their sexual development and have ambiguous physical sex. All those who are born this way have been created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others, they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known so that they may live a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ (Matt. 19:12, Rom. 8:19-22, John 9:1-3).
- g. All persons have been created in the image of God and should be accorded human dignity. Hateful, fearful, unconcerned harassment of persons who experience same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria should be repudiated. We believe that respect for those who experience same-sex orientation or gender dysphoria involves honest, reasoned, nonviolent sharing of facts concerning the immorality and liability of unethical beliefs, behaviors, and identities. On the other hand, endorsing what the Bible disapproves of, endangers people, and dishonors God (Rom. 14:19, Eph. 4:29, Col. 4:6, Gal. 6:10, 1 Cor. 10:32-33).
- h. Christian churches should reach out in love and truth to minister to people affected by these struggles, and we believe that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptation should be patiently assisted in their battle, not ostracized or disdained. However, the more prominent a leadership role or modeling role a person holds in a church, the higher will be the expectations for God's ideal of sexual obedience and wholeness. We affirm that all people should find help in the church to engage in the Biblical battle against all improper sexual thoughts, behaviors, and identities (Mark 2:17, Gal. 6:1, James 3:1, 5:19-20, 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

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