

CHINESE BIBLE CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPERS

Regarding Abortion

Regarding Holy Spirit & Charismatic Movement

Regarding Church & Politics

Regarding Divorce & Remarriage

Regarding Homosexuality

Regarding Women in Ministry

Regarding Doing Business in Church and Christian Community

Updated: May 2018

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPERS

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SUMMARY STATEMENTS OF CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPERS

Abortion

We, the Chinese Bible Church of San Diego, take the stand that a fetus is fully human. They are made according to God's image and glory. We believe that it is against both God's special and general revelation to kill an innocent human being. Throughout this paper we will discuss Biblical and non-Biblical evidence that supports this view. We will also touch upon sensitive issues such as cases when the baby is endangering the mother's life, when the parents know that the baby will be severely handicapped, when a woman is impregnated by rape, and also implications on fertility treatment.

Lastly, we at CBCSD want to offer that there is grace for those who have previously undergone abortion treatment. If there is any need for counseling in this area please feel free to approach one of the pastoral staff.

Holy Spirit & Charismatic Movement

The Charismatic Movement is an expression used to refer to a movement within historic churches that began in the 1950s. There are seven primary common teachings in today's New Charismatic Movement. We affirm that this movement has brought some positive impacts (i.e., lively and personal worship, actively exercising spiritual gifts in the church life, new motivation for evangelism and missions, and more holistic view on the gospel). We then address some of our concerns we have in the rest of the paper.

The Holy Spirit is the life-giving "breath" of God. It is also Christ's great gift to the Church, so that Christians could be regenerated, and empowered by the Spirit for holy living and effective service. Unfortunately, some unbalanced practices put greater emphasis on personal experience and the teachings of certain individuals over the teachings of Scripture. We believe such practices are wrong.

In today's church life, we affirm the existence of the sign (miraculous) gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, sign gifts should not be considered the absolute authentications of the work of the Holy Spirit. The practicing of such gifts must be examined by the clearly revealed Biblical truths and should submit to the supervision of the church leadership. The practicing of these gifts should avoid individualism and heroism, and should be governed by the principles of love and orderliness.

Church and Politics

God not only has designs for our government but for our roles as citizens. Jesus calls us to be responsible citizens, to obey authorities and participate in the legal process. As citizens of the U.S.A we are called to participate in the forming and passing of our laws. As a democracy, we are asked by our country to represent ourselves, our values, and our morality.

Things we should do:

- Vote in a manner that reflects your personal, moral, and Christian convictions
- Be informed of the political process and issues

- Participate in our government lawfully and with integrity. (Vote!)

Divorce and Remarriage

God created male and female in His own image to exercise dominion over His created kingdom (Gen 1:26-27). It is revealed in Genesis 2:24 God's design of a life-long male-female union of intimacy and oneness, set in priority over all human relationships. This divine and social institution of marriage is held up throughout Scripture as the model for a sexual relationship and foundation for the family unit (Gen 1:28). Therefore, divorce is not an option for believers. However, due to human sinfulness, God permits couples to divorce under certain difficult circumstances, such as deprivation of livelihood (Ex 21:10-11), marriage infidelity (Mat 19:9) and abandonment (1 Cor 7:15). The marital bond ends with the death of a spouse; therefore, the surviving spouse is free to remarry. In cases of divorce, while marital reconciliation is a priority, remarriage is allowed for the offended parties of legitimate divorces and for those whose spouses have been remarried.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality – A Definition

Webster's Dictionary defines "homosexual" as "of, relating to, or characterized by the tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex."

God's View of Homosexuality

God reveals in the Bible that homosexuality is a sin. It goes against God's design for our relationships. Homosexuality, like any other sin, should be repented of and laid at the cross of Jesus Christ. (Section 1, which follows FAQs, examines all the Bible passages that refer to homosexuality).

God's Design of the Male-Female Relationship

God created male and female in His own image (Gen. 1:27). They were to exercise dominion over the earth and live in fruitful relationship with each other (1:28). It was God who declared man's need for a companion – "a helper suitable for him," and with the creation of the woman, humanity was perfected in the distinction of genders. God further revealed His design of the male-female union in Genesis 2:24, from which we first see the institution of marriage and foundation for the family unit. The male and female relationship, and specifically, marriage, is held up throughout Scripture as the model for a sexual relationship.

Women in Ministry

We believe that in God's creation, male and female carry the same essence, status, dignity and glory. Both male and female are equally bestowed to undertake God-given responsibility to govern His creation.

We believe that Christ is the head of the church, His body, and all members, male or female, are to love one another, and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. However, men and women in leadership must demonstrate in family living the demand as set forth in Ephesians 5:21-25 for husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to their own husbands.

We believe that women should be given opportunities to exercise their gifts and serve together with brothers, including preaching, teaching and leading to build up the body of Christ.

Doing Business in Church and Christian Community

The purpose of the church is to worship the true God, spread the gospel, nurture disciples, and foster mutual help among Christians. We must make our best effort to preserve this pure purpose and to prevent any other purpose or attempts from adulterating this purpose. For these reasons, the church should adhere to the scriptural principle stated in First Corinthian 10, 10:23: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” Brothers and sisters cannot conduct business activities in church activities and venues or using any church's resources.

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON ABORTION

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

SUMMARY STATEMENT

We, the Chinese Bible Church of San Diego, take the stand that a fetus is fully human. They are made according to God's image and glory. We believe that it is against both God's special and general revelation to kill an innocent human being. Throughout this paper we will discuss Biblical and non-Biblical evidence that supports this view. We will also touch upon sensitive issues such as cases when the baby is endangering the mother's life, when the parents know that the baby will be severely handicapped, when a woman is impregnated by rape, and also implications on fertility treatment.

Lastly, we at CBCSD want to offer that there is grace for those who have previously undergone abortion treatment. If there is any need for counseling in this area please feel free to approach one of the pastoral staff.

SECTION ONE: BIBLICAL TEACHING

Of all the moral issues, the most pressing are those involving life and death. Out of that category, the one that is most prevalent in society today is the moral issue of abortion. As Christians living in a world that is becoming increasingly secular, we must clearly know the scriptural principles related to abortion and take a firm Biblical stand.

The key issue of abortion is a moral and theological one concerning the nature of the fetus, the human status of the unborn. Our view of humanity will largely determine our attitude toward abortion. There are generally three views concerning the humanity of the unborn.

1. The fetus is subhuman; it is merely part of the mother's body. Therefore, it can be removed just as any other unwanted tissue. This is completely dependent upon the mother's choice.
2. The fetus is potentially human; it is in the process of becoming human from conception to birth. Even though the fetus may have more value than mere things or animals, such a value must be weighed against the mother's right and the concern of the society. So in the case of rape, incest, genetic deformities, or the threat of the mother's life, abortion is favored.
3. The fetus is fully human from the point of conception. Therefore any intentional taking of a fetus' life is homicide. We believe this position is supported by both Biblical and Non-Biblical evidence.

Biblical Evidence

1. Unborn babies are called "children." The same word has been used for infants and young children (Luke 1:41, 44; 2:12, 18:15).

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:41)

As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. (Luke 1:44)

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12-baby is the same term used as in 1:44)

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. (Luke 18:15)

2. The unborn are created by God (Ps. 139:13) just as God created Adam and Eve in His image (Gen 1:27). God who "made me in the womb" (Job 31:15, Ps. 119:73), who "from my mother's womb" has been my God (Ps. 22:9-10; 71:6).

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13)

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers? (Job 31:15)

Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands. (Psalm 119:73)

9 Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast. 10 From birth I was cast on you; from my mother's womb you have been my God. (Psalm 22:9-10)

From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you. (Psalm 71:6)

3. The life of the unborn is protected by the same punishment for injury or death (Exod. 21:22-25) as that of an adult (Gen 9:6)

²² "If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury (to the baby), the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows.²³ But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. (Exodus 21:22-25)

"Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind. (Genesis 9:6)

4. Christ was human from the point he was conceived in Mary's womb (Matt. 1:20-21)

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from

the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21)

5. The image of God includes “male and Female” (Gen 1:27), but it is a scientific fact that maleness and femaleness is determined at the moment of conception.

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

6. Unborn children possess personal characteristics such as sin (Ps. 51:5) and joy that are distinctive of humans.

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5)

Taken as a whole, these Scripture verses present the case that an unborn child is fully human. They are created in the image of God and have every right to be a living being if so decided by his/her Creator.

Non-Biblical Evidence

Areas of modern medical science appear to concur with the Biblical teaching that human life starts at the moment of conception. From the moment of conception the 23 pairs of chromosomes are complete. The fetus has a unique genotype which is distinct from both parents. The child’s sex, size, and shape, color of skin, temperament and intelligence has already been determined. From the moment of conception till death, all that is added is food, water, and oxygen.

Primary conclusion

From the evidences of both biblical and non biblical sources, it is clear that a fertilized ovum is nothing less than a full human being. To kill through abortion is the act of killing life and is prohibited by God’s law, and the law of the country.

SECTION TWO: SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Endangerment of the mother’s life

There are some cases in which the development of the fetus is in direct danger to the mother’s life. These should be counseled on a case by case basis, but there are circumstances in which abortion then can be seen as an act of self-defense.

Conception through rape

Though extremely rare, there are some cases in which a woman is impregnated through rape. At this point there are competing moral factors such as the mental and emotional well-being of the mother, the life of the unborn baby, etc. Although this is a tragic situation, CBCSD continues to hold a high value on the sanctity of life and encourages victims to explore options that provide the unborn baby a chance for life. We are dedicated as a church body to provide support and counsel for any member in this situation.

Pregnancy where early detection of deformity/handicap occurs

With the advance of modern technology it is now possible to test to see if a fetus is susceptible or likely to be born with a handicap of some sort. Depending on the severity of the handicap, sometimes the question of “Is it better for the child to end his or her life than have him/her live with this handicap for the rest of his/her life?” comes up. We would argue that people born with even severe circumstances (blindness, deafness, Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, etc.) still have the ability to enjoy and live fulfilling lives. Not only that, they also have the ability to engage in meaningful and saving relationship with God. Therefore we do not support abortion to occur in these circumstances.

Implications for Fertility Treatment (specifically In vitro fertilization, and zygote intrafallopian transfer)

With the advent of reproductive technologies it is important for parents-to-be who are using these technologies to be aware moral issues. The way that these technologies generally work is that a woman is given hormonal stimulation and doctors then harvest as many eggs as possible (around 12-16). These eggs are then fertilized by the husband’s sperm in a lab. These are now embryo’s fully potent to be human beings. (Once embryo’s implant themselves into the uterus wall they are considered fetuses).

These eggs are then implanted into a woman’s uterus with the hope that one or more of these embryos will plant and the woman will become pregnant. If this doesn’t work the first time, there are extra embryos for a few more treatments.

The moral question that is raised is what a couple determines to do with the possible extra fertilized embryos. Possibilities range from freezing them for a later time when the couple may want to become pregnant again, giving them up for adoption for families who may want to have babies but can’t produce eggs or sperm viable for pregnancy, and commonly donation to research (often times stem cell research).

When a couple decides to go through in vitro fertilization or zygote intra-fallopian transfer, they must carefully decide what to do with the embryos as they now have the potential to be full human individuals given the right environment. We believe that adoption and holding the embryos for future pregnancy attempts are valid options but the donation of embryos to be used for stem cell harvesting is not.

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Charismatic Movement is an expression used to refer to a movement within historic churches that began in the 1950s. There are seven primary common teachings in today's New Charismatic Movement. We affirm that this movement has brought some positive impacts (i.e. lively and personal worship, actively exercising spiritual gifts in church life, new motivation for evangelism and missions, and a more holistic view on the gospel). We then address some of our concerns we have in the rest of the paper.

The Holy Spirit is the life-giving "breath" of God. It is also Christ's great gift to the Church, so that Christians could be regenerated, and empowered by the Spirit for holy living and effective service. Unfortunately, some unbalanced practices put greater emphasis on personal experience or the teachings of certain individuals over the teachings of Scripture. We believe such practices are wrong.

In today's church life, we affirm the existence of the sign (miraculous) gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, sign gifts should not be considered the absolute authentications of the work of the Holy Spirit. The practicing of such gifts must be examined by the clearly revealed Biblical truths and should submit to the supervision of the church leadership. The practicing of these gifts should avoid individualism and heroism, and should be governed by the principles of love and orderliness.

BACKGROUND

A. Ancient Records

While the Charismatic Movement has taken on wings during the twentieth century, similar views and manifestations can be found on occasion throughout history:

- Several of the early church fathers mention glossolalia (speaking in tongues) in the church. Irenaeus (d.c. 200) and Tertullian (d. 200) speak favorably of it, Chrysostom (d. 407) disapproved, and Augustine (d. 430) declared that the gift was only for New Testament times. The Montanist movement of the late second century included prophetesses, claims of new revelation, speaking in tongues, and an ascetical and legalistic outlook; the movement was declared heretical by the official church and speaking in tongues seems to have been rare in the church after this time.
- During the middle ages speaking in tongues were reported in monasteries of the Orthodox church. In the seventeenth century it seems to have been practiced in France amongst the Huguenots (Protestants) and the Jansenists (pietistic Catholics). In the nineteenth century glossolalia was practiced in America amongst the Shakers and Mormons, and in Scotland and London amongst the followers of Edward Irving, who

saw this as the latter-rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit prior to the pre-millennial return of the Lord.¹

B. Charismatic Movement in the 20th Century

The Charismatic Movement is an expression used to refer to a movement within historic churches that began in the 1950s. In the earlier stages the movement was often termed "neo Pentecostal"; in more recent years it has frequently been referred to as the "charismatic renewal" or the "charismatic renewal movement." Therefore, participants are usually described as "charismatics."

On the American scene it is possible to date significant charismatic beginnings to the year 1960 with the national publicity given to certain events connected with the ministry of Dennis Bennett, who at that time was Episcopal rector in Van Nuys, California. Since then there has been a continuing growth of the movement within many of the mainline churches: first, such Protestant churches as Episcopal, Lutheran, and Presbyterian (early 1960s); second, the Roman Catholic (beginning in 1967); and third, the Greek Orthodox (about 1971). The charismatic movement has affected almost every historic church and has spread to many churches and countries beyond the United States. This continuing growth has resulted in a multiplicity of national, regional, and local conferences, the production of a wide range of literature, and increasing attention to doctrinal and theological questions both within and outside the movement. The challenge to the churches may be seen in the fact that since 1960 well over one hundred official denominational documents, regional, national, continental, and international, on the charismatic movement have been produced.

The immediate background of the charismatic movement is "classical Pentecostalism" dating from the early twentieth century, with its emphasis on baptism with (or in) the Holy Spirit as an endowment of power subsequent to conversion, speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of this baptism, and the continuing validity of the spiritual gifts (charismata) of 1 Cor. 12:8 - 10. Because of such distinctive emphases these early "Pentecostals", as they came to be called, found no place in the mainline churches (they either freely left or were forced out) and thus founded their own. As a result there gradually came into being such "classical" Pentecostal denominations as the Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the Church of God in Christ, and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

C. New Charismatic Movement

This new restorational movement advocated by most current charismatics has generated a groundswell of charismatic leaders to open themselves up to "new spiritual revelations" and "deeper doctrinal truths." The theological menu served in most charismatic churches today is filled with novel ideas, new doctrinal teachings, and unusual practices.

While there are some basic differences existing between new movements arising among charismatics, their overall theological outlook (e.g., the restoration of modern apostles and prophets) and eschatological direction is the same. The New Charismatics are proclaiming that a new supernatural move of God's Spirit is sweeping the entire globe.

¹ Quote paragraph was taken from Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology* and Walter Elwell's *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Montanists," "Pentecostalism," and "Tongues, Speaking in.")

This new move will be so revolutionary that the entire course of human history will soon be changed. But in order for this glorious dream to work, the majority of the Christian churches must unite in philosophy and purpose. Therefore, one of the goals of the New Charismatics is to make charismatics and non-charismatics (and non-Christians as well), "New Charismatics." In other words, charismatics subscribing to new restoration ideas deeply desire that all believers will taste this "new move" of the Holy Spirit and unite with them in their efforts to supernaturally transform the world.

Most refer to this thriving new development expanding throughout the world as "restorationism" or "Latter-Rain restorationism." They believe that history is moving toward a spiritual climax where God's power will be poured out on the church like never before. Restoration promoters believe that this new move could be the Lord's final move where the church will be endued with new power to Christianize the world before Jesus returns. In order for this dominion pursuit to be realized, the five-fold ministry expounded in Eph. 4:11 (apostle, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) needs to be recognized by the Church at large and given room to exercise its supernatural gifts and God-ordained authority.

Some contemporary restoration movements that fall under the umbrella term "The New Charismatics" are: Kingdom Theology; the Word-Faith/Positive Confession; and the Third Wave or Signs and Wonders movement. These groups have a common bond that promotes God's moving in a new supernatural way through signs and wonders, that the church must be restored to first century apostolic Christianity before Jesus returns, and that modern apostles and prophets will play a key role in this process. To understand new developments and teachings spreading through the charismatic world, it is necessary to go back in history to briefly examine some of the influential "higher life" movements of the twentieth century, beginning with Pentecostalism. Tracing the origins of these movements will give better insight into how certain teachings originated and developed over the years and why certain charismatic doctrines are emphasized so strongly today.

There are seven primary common teachings that shaped this new charismatic movement:

1. **Restorationism** — This further development of restoration theology viewed God as progressively restoring truths to the church since the Reformation.
2. **Fivefold Ministry** — The teaching that God is restoring apostles and prophets to the church to function with the three other gifted offices: evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. 4:11). Apostles and prophets provided direction with new revelations that would play a major role in paving the way for Christ's second coming.
3. **Laying on of the Hands** — A ritual performed by modern apostles and prophets to impart the Holy Spirit and other spiritual blessings and gifts.
4. **Speaking in Tongues and Faith Healing** — The belief that speaking-in-tongue is an obvious sign for the receiving of the Holy Spirit for everybody, and faith healing is a norm of God's way of work.
5. **Prophecy** — Views the practice of "personal prophecy" as being restored to the church. Prophecy would no longer be restricted to general words of exhortation, but would include personal detailed revelations for guidance and instruction.
6. **Recovery of True Worship** — The belief that God's manifested presence is dependent upon a certain

order of worship involving singing in tongues, clapping, shouting, singing prophecies, and a new order of praise dancing.

7. ***Unity of the Faith*** — The doctrine that the church, usually perceived to be a band of overcomers in neo-Pentecostal ranks, will attain unity in the faith before Christ returns.

D. Affirmations

While having concerns on some of the teachings in today's Charismatic movement (which we will discuss in the latter part of this paper), we do recognize its positive impacts. These impacts are here to stay. The movement has brought in more lively and personal worship, renewed interest in exercising spiritual gifts in church life, new motivation for evangelism and missions, and a more holistic view on the gospel. We affirm the participants' passion and desires to experience God. Yet, we do pray that we will all have zeal that is based on true knowledge of God. (Romans 10:2)

SECTION ONE: BIBLICAL TEACHING

A. The Holy Spirit and His Work

Our God is the triune God—Father, Son and Spirit—whom has been revealed through the entire Bible. In Jesus' Great Commission, we are commanded to baptize believers “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). In Apostle Paul's epistle, he blessed the church with “the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14). It is an inspired reminder that our God is ultimately One with the three persons of the Trinity.

We, as Christians, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Jon. 3:6). We have received the Holy Spirit when we were saved. (Act 2:38; Gal. 3:2; Rom 10:9). We now live by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) and keep in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). We also need to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) so that we could bear the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

We, as the Church, have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) so that we need to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) through the fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1-2).

B. The Unbalanced Teaching and Practices of the Charismatic Movement

The Charismatic movement put greater emphasis on personal experience and has not been faithful to the broader biblical teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit and the church.

1. ***Miracles*** — We believe God works in miracles (Matt. 13:58). But we also believe that God normally chooses to work through natural means rather than supernatural (1 Tim. 5:23). The purpose of the miracle is to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20). The Apostle Paul affirms this principle when he states: “Christ is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:22-24). Besides, miracles and acts of the supernatural should not be considered absolute authentications of the work of the Holy Spirit. Pharaoh's magicians could transform their staffs into snake just like Moses' did (Exo. 7:11). We also know that those who practice the occult can contact spirits and prophesy (1 Sam 28). Jesus clearly said that there will be non-Christians who will do miracles and prophesy in the name of Jesus (Matt. 7:22, 23; Matt. 24:24).

Spiritual discernment should be exercised.

2. ***Spiritual gifts*** — We believe that God continues to grant spiritual gifts (literally, *charisma*) to believers to enable them effectively to proclaim the Word and exercise practical ministries (see Rom. 12, I Cor. 12, I Cor. 14 and Eph. 4). The purpose of spiritual gifts is to contribute something to the building up, maturation, and wholeness of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-13). Gifts are granted not for the fulfillment of the gifted individual, but for the benefit of the church—“for the common good” (I Cor. 12:7). The Apostle Paul urges us beyond self-serving individualism by remembering that “each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:5). “Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts,” concludes the Apostle, “try to excel in gifts that build up the church” (I Cor. 14:12).
3. ***Speaking in Tongues*** — Some people have concluded from these texts in the Book of Acts (2:4, 10:45-46, 19:6) that speaking in tongues is the necessary evidence that a Christian has been filled with the Holy Spirit. We disagree. We do not believe that one can confidently generalize from these cases that all Spirit-filled people must speak in tongues. Elsewhere Scripture makes it clear that speaking in tongues is a gift to some, but not all Christians. “Do all speak in tongues?” the Apostle Paul asks rhetorically (I Cor. 12:30). From the context, the obvious answer is “Of course not.” One of the New Testament’s concerns is that in its direct and untranslated form tongues cannot be a source of edification for the Body (I Cor. 14:16-17) and it will hinder the gospel (I Cor. 14:23). Therefore, we encourage those with the gift of tongues to use it privately as a means of edifying themselves (I Cor. 14:4).

SECTION TWO: IMPLICATIONS TO TODAY’S CHURCH LIFE

We affirm the existence of the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit in today’s church life. However, it is purely God’s mercy and sovereignty in granting these gifts to His Church for the edifications of His Body and for the spreading of the Gospel. Although we affirm the gifts of the Holy Spirit we do not affirm the restoration of the office of Apostle or Prophet. This means that their teachings do not carry the same authority as Biblical teaching.

Sign gifts should not be considered the absolute authentications of the work of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 7:22, 23; Matt. 24:24) The practicing of such gifts must be examined by the clearly revealed Biblical truths and should submit to the supervision of the church leadership. The practicing of these gifts should avoid individualism and heroism, and should be governed by the principles of love and orderliness.

A. On the Gift of Tongues

- Untranslated tongues cannot be a source of edification for the Body, and should not be expressed in the congregation unless the gift of tongues interpretation is also operating (I Cor. 14:16-17, 27-28).
- We encourage those with the gift of tongues to use it privately as a means of edifying themselves (I Cor. 14:4).

B. On the Gifts of Healing and Exorcism

- Healing and exorcism are the revelation of the Kingdom Power. The church leaders should pray for

the sick (physically, psychologically, and spiritually) according to the Biblical teachings.

- It is God who heals (*divine-healing*, rather than *faith-healing*). We should avoid heroism and should not exalt the vessels through which the healing was performed. Not all people or illness will be healed. It is God's authority. We should not jump to the conclusions to avoid false accusations or secondary hurts to either the sick or the workers.

C. On the Gifts of Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, & Discerning of Spirits

- These gifts, which were mentioned only in I Corinthians 12-14, are relatively obscure and undefined. The Charismatic movement considers these gifts as situational, revelatory gifts, which involve direct revelation from God.
- The practicing of such gifts must be examined by the clearly revealed Biblical truths and should submit to the supervision of the church leadership. (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21)

D. On Attending the "Pursuing Meetings"

- We should desire for the presence of the Holy Spirit in all our meetings. The results of the presence of the Holy Spirit should lead to the spreading of the gospel and the bearing of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.
- God is still imparting Spiritual gifts and granting healings. However, we discourage believers from attending meetings that may mislead people to have an incorrect expectation or understanding of the Holy Spirit's work. We should not mistake certain worship styles or certain phenomena (tongue-speaking, golden dusts, laughter, cry, knocking-out, shacking, rolling on the floor etc.) to be the presence of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSIONS

We cannot emphasize the Holy Spirit too much, except when we do so at the expense of the other persons of the Trinity. Jesus himself modeled for us a spirit-empowered, prayer-filled, Word-inspired lifestyle that as believers we are called to follow after. We encourage all to be filled with the Holy Spirit by submitting to the lead of the Holy Spirit to experience the fullness of the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON CHURCH & POLITICS

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

The journey into the political arena can be confusing for many believers. Who do we vote for? How do we approach unjust laws? What is the church's role in the political process? In this paper we will lay out Biblical principles that will help guide our members to understand how we should approach the nature of politics; both as a church and as individuals.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

God not only has designs for our government but for our roles as citizens. Jesus calls us to be responsible citizens, to obey authorities and participate in the legal process. As citizens of the U.S.A we are called to participate in the forming and passing of our laws. As a democracy, we are asked by our country to represent ourselves, our values, and our morality.

Things we should do:

- Vote in a manner that reflects your personal, moral, and Christian convictions
- Be informed of the political process and issues
- Participate in our government lawfully and with integrity. (Vote!)

SECTION ONE: BIBLICAL TEACHING

The authority of government - *Romans 13:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-14, Matthew 22:15-22*

According to the Bible, governments and authorities have been established by God to uphold good. The Bible clearly states the responsibility that we as citizens have to submit to the institutions that have been put in place. Jesus himself teaches his disciples to give to the government what is due to it, and to God what is due to Him.

¹ *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1-2)*

¹³ *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority,¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. (1 Peter 2:13-14)*

¹⁵ *Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words.¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax¹⁸ to Caesar or not?"¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius.²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"²¹ "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away. (Matthew 15:21-22)*

The duty to bless our nation and all other nations - Matthew 5:13-16, Genesis 26:3-5

Jesus teaches that we as believers are called to be the salt and light of the Earth. We are called to shine our good works before men so that God may be glorified. Also, the covenant that God made with Abraham destined his people to be ones that would bless all nations. In the area of our duty as citizens, we are called to participate in our civic duties in a way that will bless our nation and that will shine before men. Therefore we should not neglect the opportunity we have as citizens to take part in our civic duties (voting, jury duty, etc) to bless our nation as representatives of God.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)

³Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions.” (Genesis 26:3-5)

SECTION TWO: IMPLICATIONS TO CHURCH PRACTICE

The primary goal of the Church is to bring people into relationship with Christ. We recognize governments to do not create righteous society. Church is meant to be a place where growth is developed, not a forum for political stances. Members should not use our church as a place to tote political opinions. This does not mean that we cannot and should not discuss political issues in church but our focus should always be about how we truly impact our society for the sake of reconciling people to God.

Things we will do as a church

- Focus primarily on how to impact our society to be reconciled to Christ as opposed to trying make people moral people through legislation.
- For matters where political and Biblical values intersect, we will uphold Biblical values and promote Christian stances.

Things we will not do as a church

- Equate Christianity with how you vote

The Church is a religious charity, and therefore it must comply with the provisions of the IRS. As a religious institution we cannot engage in support of a political party, candidate, sponsorship or advertising.

Furthermore, no single candidate or a party’s political stance is fully in line with the Bible (Romans 3:23) No single candidate or party can be considered the ones that all Christians must support.

In order to avoid misunderstanding

- a. Church members who are leaders of a political party are not allowed to use church meetings to garner support for their platform so as not to be mistaken as the official position of the Church
- b. No members are allowed to use the church's publications, website, email, or other forms of communication to support a particular party, candidate, or platform.
- c. The Church will not donate money to a candidate or a political activist group.
- d. Lastly, the church will not allow political parties to use the church as a platform for promoting their agenda except for neutral events that are used for public service.

If in case there is a specific call from God to take political action as a church, it will be done in agreement with the pastors of CBCSD.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

APPENDIX

What does separation of Church and State mean?

In the Bill of Rights it reads:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Basically this means that the government cannot establish a religion, or prohibit the expression of one's religion. It does not mean that there cannot be religious expressions in the public arena.

What are some general ways that Christians approach the voting process?

It is important to understand that it is possible for a group of godly Christians to love the Lord and still have different political positions. Therefore, when someone's political views are contrary to one another's, Christians should not immediately think the other is not biblical. It is important that we as believers learn to have patience and to speak the truth in love.

What happens when we disagree with the Law as believers?

It is important to understand that God's desire is to abide by the law even when they seem unfair. Unless the laws specifically cause us to disobey God's law, we as believers should make every effort to abide by the laws of this nation. If necessary, we can take peaceful protest but it must be carefully weighed and without damage to persons or property.

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

SUMMARY STATEMENT

God created male and female in His own image to exercise dominion over His created kingdom (Gen. 1:26-27). His design for marriage is revealed as a life-long male-female union of intimacy and oneness, set in priority over all human relationships (Gen 2:24). This divine and social institution of marriage is held up throughout Scripture as the model for a sexual relationship and foundation for the family unit (Gen 1:28). Therefore, divorce is not an option for believers. However, due to human sinfulness, God permits couples to divorce under certain difficult circumstances, such as deprivation of livelihood (Ex 21:10-11), marriage infidelity (Mat 19:9) and abandonment (1 Cor 7:15). The marital bond ends with the death of a spouse; therefore, the surviving spouse is free to remarry. In cases of divorce, while marital reconciliation is a priority, remarriage is allowed for the offended parties of legitimate divorces and for those whose spouses have been remarried after divorces.

SECTION ONE: BIBLICAL TEACHING

On Marriage

God has established marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman for a life-long relationship of intimacy and oneness—spiritually, emotionally, and physically; a companionship in sharing thoughts and feelings, goals and plans, dreams and aspirations; an alliance in facing challenges in life; and stewardship over all resources entrusted to them (Gen 2:18, 21-25).

Being a sacred covenant instituted by God, marriage is to be respected by all, preserved with all effort, and kept pure. Therefore, all illicit sexual relationships: pre-marital sex including cohabitation by mutual consent, extramarital sex, homosexuality and adultery are sinful, because they defile the sanctity of marriage. (Mat 19:4-6; Heb 13:4)

While all legal marriages between a man and a woman are recognized and honored by the church, only a marital relationship between two believers meets the compatibility requirement of Scripture (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Cor 7:39).

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the earth.... ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen 1:26-28)

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable (corresponding) for him" ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep.... ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman, 'for she was taken out of man."²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. ²⁵The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. (Gen 2:18, 21-25)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Heb 13:4)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Cor 6:14)

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. (1 Cor 7:39)

On Divorce

Divorce is not an option for believers, because it is neither God's desire nor His means of ending a marriage with divorce; it is only due to human sinfulness that God permits couples to divorce under certain difficult circumstances.

Jesus makes an exception in the case of marriage infidelity, where divorce and remarriage are allowed for the victim of the already damaged marital relationship (Mat 19:9).

Abandonment and rejection for whatever reason by the unbelieving spouse sets the abandoned believer free to divorce and remarry another believer (1 Cor 7:15; Deut 24:1-2, Matthew 19:8).

At a time when women were not able to make a living on their own, Mosaic laws allowed divorce for marital deprivation (Ex 21:10-11): even a slave girl who became a wife had three rights within marriage—food, clothing, and marital rights. If these were deprived, the wronged spouse had the right to seek freedom from marriage. Paul echoed the three basic rights of married couples, as “do not deprive each other” refers to the need for sexual intimacy, and “a married man is concerned about the affairs of the world—how he can please his wife” refers to material needs such as food and clothing, thus clarifying marital obligations to one another, both physical and emotional (1 Cor 7: 3-5, 33-34).

If a believer abandons and rejects his or her spouse, then he does not honor his marital duties in the physical and emotional aspects, and the church should intervene to bring the offending party back to the way God desires for marriage. If he or she refuses to listen to exhortations and warnings, the church should treat him/her as a non-believer (Mat 18:15-17).

Therefore, adultery, abandonment and rejection, and emotional and physical deprivation sanction divorce, for they violate and damage the elements of marriage—physical and emotional intimacy (two becoming one flesh), fidelity and commitment (leaving and cleaving).

However, even with legitimate grounds, divorce is never prescribed, for it breaks the marriage relationship such that the two will no longer be one. Therefore, divorce should not be considered as an easy exit for unhappy marriages. From the legal standpoint, all rights and privileges pertaining to the marriage relationship are dissolved, and all parties must respect and abide by the legal requirements of the divorce.

As the Lord hates divorce, He hates domestic violence (Mal 2:16), which includes physical abuse that inflicts bodily harm and emotional abuse that causes psychological harm. When it is life-threatening, temporary

separation and shelters must be provided for the victims. While there is no explicit law for such a condition, the spirit of the city of refuge can be applied, for if the Lord provides shelter for those who have unintentionally killed someone (as in Num 35:9-12), shelter should be provided for those victims of intentional violence.

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Mat 19:4-5)

¹⁴You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.¹⁵ Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. (Mal 2:14-15)

¹⁰If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights.¹¹ If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money. (Ex 21:10-11)

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house.... (Deut 24:1)

Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. (Mat 19:8)

"I hate divorce...and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. (Mal 2:16)

¹⁵If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Mat 18:15-17)

On Remarriage

The marital bond ends with the death of a spouse; therefore, the surviving spouse is free to remarry (1 Cor 7:39).

Jesus makes an exception for cases of marriage infidelity, where divorce and remarriage are allowed for victims of damaged marital relationships (1 Cor 19:9).

Remarriage is allowed for the offended parties of other legal divorces legitimized by Scripture: those deprived of livelihood (Ex 21: 10-11), rejected or abandoned by their unbelieving spouses (1 Cor. 7:15) or “believer” spouses who refuse to listen to the exhortations of the church (Deut 24:1-2; Mat 18:15-17).

The divorced is free to remarry when his/her former spouse has been remarried, which makes marital reconciliation impossible. Otherwise, one should remain unmarried or to be reconciled to his/her former spouse.

If the divorce has taken place before conversion, the believer spouse should seek reconciliation and make possible restitution with his/her former spouse (Mat 5:23-26). However, it is not necessary for him/her to remarry an unbelieving former spouse, since spiritual compatibility is essential for Christian marriage (2 Cor 6:14; I Cor 7:39).

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. (1 Cor 7:39)

But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. (1 Cor 7:15)

I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery. (Mat 19:9)

¹If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, ²and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man.... (Deut 24:1-2)

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.... I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. (Mat 5:23-26)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.... (2 Cor 6:14)

SECTION TWO: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

Based on the compatibility principle in Scripture (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Cor 7:39), CBCSD pastors officiate legal marriages between a man and a woman who are both believers, as a covenant made before God and the community of His people. However, since marriage is both a divine and social institution, all legal marriages (provided that they are not against the Biblical teaching) are recognized and honored by the church.

Christians are to honor the God-instituted marriage, guard it with our best effort, and seek support from the church to protect and nurture our marital relationship.

As spouses continuously harden their hearts not to turn away from adultery, deprivation, rejection and abandonment which violate the elements of marriage, the offended spouses have the freedom to leave a problematic marriage. However, brothers and sisters should seek pastoral counseling and advice as they go through marital struggles before they make any important decision. Separation and shelters should be assured for victims of domestic violence, during which counseling for both the offenders and the victims must be provided. However, due to the complexity of many such cases, the church should judge every case on its own merits. We should pay attention to the spirit, rather than the “letter” of marriage. In the context of salvation, seek God’s heart and leading.

The principle of the council of the church in Matthew 18:15-17 should be exercised wisely. For example, clear instruction is given on abandonment by the unbeliever spouse in 1 Corinthians 7:15; in the case of abandonment

by the believer spouse, the offended party should bring the matter to the attention of the church for guidance and help. Church intervention and discipline should be ushered in.

As a redemptive community, with the responsibility of protecting marriage and family, the church plays a very important role in preventing marriages from falling apart. By providing premarital and marital education, counseling, mentorship and necessary intervention, the church helps to redeem broken marital relationships. Divorce should be considered as the last resort to end a marriage after all solutions have been exhausted, including encouragement by other fellow Christians, pastoral guidance, temporary separation and professional counseling.

As Craig S. Keener puts it, Jesus' message to everyone is plain enough:

“To those contemplating divorce, don't;

To those inclined to condemn without knowing the circumstances, don't;

To those near a prospective Christian divorce, offer yourselves as humble agents
of reconciliation and healing;

To those who have repented and made restitution (insofar as possible) for a
sinful choice, trust his forgiveness;

To those on whom dissolution of marriage forced itself without invitation, be
healed by God's grace and dare to stand for your freedom in Christ, which
no one has the authority to take away from you.”

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON HOMOSEXUALITY

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

The purpose of this document is to summarize the church's theological stance on homosexuality. After a summary statement and short answers to some FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), we examine pertinent Bible passages in Section 1 and summarize the practical implications for the Church in Section 2. A one-page Appendix provides a short list of resources and references.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Homosexuality – A Definition

Webster's Dictionary defines "homosexual" as "of, relating to, or characterized by the tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex."

God's View of Homosexuality

God reveals in the Bible that homosexuality is a sin. It goes against God's design for our relationships. Homosexuality, like any other sin, should be repented of and laid at the cross of Jesus Christ. (Section 1, which follows FAQs, examines all the Bible passages that refer to homosexuality).

God's Design of the Male-Female Relationship

God created male and female in His own image (Gen. 1:27). They were to exercise dominion over the earth and live in fruitful relationship with each other (1:28). It was God who declared man's need for a companion – "a helper suitable for him," and with the creation of the woman, humanity was perfected in the distinction of genders. God further revealed His design of the male-female union in Genesis 2:24, from which we first see the institution of marriage and foundation for the family unit. The male and female relationship, and specifically, marriage, is held up throughout Scripture as the model for a sexual relationship.

4 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[Note: The responses to these questions are in summary form. The discussion could be much more extensive, but that is not the purpose of this document. If more understanding is sought, loving dialogue with a pastor or other spiritual mentor is encouraged].

1. Isn't homosexuality genetic?

Many efforts have been made to prove that homosexuality is caused by genetics, but to date, there is no concrete evidence for this conclusion. Findings from these studies have been inconclusive. (For a more detailed examination, one might read Chapter 11, "Answering Science," in the book, "101 Frequently Asked Questions About Homosexuality," Mike Haley, Harvest House Publishers, 2004)

If homosexuality is not genetically influenced, then it is understood as a choice. The Bible describes homosexuality as behavior that people choose to express, and we affirm this. At the same time, out of sensitivity, we acknowledge that the causes of homosexuality are so complex and unique to each individual that it cannot be neatly explained as a “conscious choice” in the same way that a person “chooses” to harm another. Many who have homosexual tendencies would not consider homosexuality as a choice. It is not uncommon to hear comments like, “I don’t remember ever making a choice” or “Why would I choose to be looked down on, picked on, or discriminated against?” Therefore it would seem to them as genetically caused.

Homosexual thoughts and desires seem natural to homosexuals, but pride and lust also feel natural. What feels natural to us doesn’t necessarily please God. There are thoughts and desires that all people deal with all of their lives, but we are not obligated to act upon every thought and desire. We are all accountable to identify what in our lives pleases or displeases God, no matter what influences or causes we could attribute. The good news is that through Jesus Christ and by the power and grace of God, we can overcome what God does not want in our lives. If you are struggling with homosexuality and same-sex attraction please seek counsel with a leader or pastor.

2. Homosexuality is a private matter. Who does it hurt? Why can’t Christians leave this issue alone?

In one sense, homosexuality is a personal orientation, and it would seem that it does not hurt anyone. However, homosexuality hurts one’s own relationship with God, and it deprives one from experiencing God’s best for that individual. And if homosexuality runs counter to God’s design and will, we believe it displeases God when society and culture are influenced to embrace it or become indifferent to what displeases Him.

If homosexuality is sin, then as with any other sin, we as Christ’s Church are called to care for those who are struggling and lead them to God’s truth and His power to redeem. We are to be ambassadors for Christ, appealing for people to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20). We are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15; 17-25).

3. What about same-sex marriage?

As we understand homosexuality to be something that God does not desire, it stands to reason that same-sex marriage runs counter to God’s design and intention for us. We see God’s instituting marriage to be between a man and a woman and are convicted, therefore, to uphold this definition of marriage.

Supporters of same-sex marriage appeal to the basic right of homosexuals to marry. However, outside a theistic worldview, the understanding of natural rights is subjective and relative. Even in the realm of what society or government deems as “equal rights,” distinctions should be considered. For example, if a facility provided a gender-specific restroom for women, men should have an equal right to a restroom dedicated to men. But men do not have the right to enter a women’s restroom. Men and women are equal, but they are not the same. Homosexuals should not and are not excluded from rights afforded to all citizens. However, no citizen has the unrestricted right to marry whomever they want. For example, a person cannot marry their child, two or more spouses, or the spouse of another person.

Proponents of same-sex marriage would have us believe that anything short of supporting their view is like racial discrimination. Bans on interracial marriage and any form of segregation or racism were and are emphatically wrong. But same-sex marriage and interracial marriage are not the same. When bans on interracial marriage were

rightly done away with, marriage was affirmed by saying that any woman has a right to marry any man and visa-versa. Same-sex marriage does not expand the right to marry. It redefines marriage.

One might argue, “What’s wrong with redefining marriage?” Again, “same-sex marriage” infringes on a definition of marriage that we hold sacred and as stipulated by God. The fight for the use of “marriage” terminology by proponents of same-sex marriage is really a fight to be equal in all things, but it has been argued that “equal” should not always mean “the same.” With respect to “equality” with married couples, same sex couples already enjoy most rights and privileges afforded to married couples through domestic partnerships.

4. What can I do if I find that a loved one is dealing with homosexuality?

You should pray for the salvation and restoration of that person the same as you would for any other person in sin. We must continue to love that person and treat him/her with compassion and understanding, but this does not mean that we approve of their sin. We must proclaim truth and practice grace.

The root causes of homosexuality are complex and hard to understand. We must be prepared to walk with those who are dealing with homosexuality for the long term and to lead them to God’s love and hope and healing through Christ.

SECTION 1: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

This section consists of summary interpretations of Bible passages referring to homosexuality.

The texts that directly speak of homosexuality are relatively few:

- Genesis 19:4-9
- Judges 19:22-25
- Leviticus 18:22; 20:13
- Romans 1:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- 1 Timothy 1:10

1. Genesis 19 and Judges 19

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.” Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. (Gen. 19:4-9, ESV)

As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, “Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him.” And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing. Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine. Let me bring them out now. Violate them and do with them what seems good to you, but against this man do not do this outrageous thing.” But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go. (Judg. 19:22-25, ESV)

Summary Interpretation

At both Sodom (Gen. 19) and Gibeah (Judges 19), men of the town sought to engage in sexual acts with the male visitors in their midst. The verb, *yadha* (“to know”), is used to describe their intentions: “Bring them/him out so that we can ‘know’ them/him.” The context and the fact that the verb is used at least on 10 occasions in the OT to convey having sexual intercourse (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25; 24:16; 38:26; 1 Sam. 1:19, etc.) affirm that sexual relations were the intentions of the men of Sodom and Gibeah.

In both passages, their intentions were referred to as “wicked” (Gen. 19:7; Judges 19:23). Other biblical texts make reference to Sodom and Gibeah’s sin (Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:50; Hos. 9:9; 10:9; 2 Pet. 2:6-7).

2. Leviticus 18 and 20

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination... “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, (Lev. 18:22, 24, ESV)

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. (Lev. 20:13, ESV)

Summary Interpretation

Among the commands in the “Holiness Code,” which God gives to His covenant people, there are instructions addressing proper sexual conduct (Lev. 18:5-23). In the verses above, sexual relations between men are clearly prohibited, and such acts are described as “abominations.” The laws against homosexuality in Leviticus 18 and 20 appear alongside other sexual sins – adultery and incest, for example.

3. Romans 1:20-27

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed

with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Rom. 1:20-27, ESV)

Summary Interpretation

Paul reaffirms the prohibitions of the OT concerning homosexuality in his condemnation of the pagan society of his day (Rom. 1:26-27). We see not only confirmation of the prohibition, but the prohibition explicitly extended to females.

Some might argue that Paul's remarks are aimed at some specific practice in the Roman Empire, such as temple prostitution or pederasty (i.e., homosexual relations between an adult and a youth), and has no bearing on same-sex relations in other contexts. That is, loving, committed homosexual relationships between two responsible adults would be ok.

However, Paul speaks of the behavior in general terms ("males with males" (v. 27), not "men with boys," as would be the case if only pederasty was in view). The immoral character of homosexuality is reinforced in the tenor of Paul's argument against "all unrighteousness and wickedness" (such as envy, murder, slander, etc.), which are consequences of abandoning God. The theme of divine creation in the context (esp. Rom. 1:20, 25) strongly suggests that the defiance of nature is manifested as sexuality that goes against God's design.

4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10

1Cor. 6:9-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality (malakos, arsenokoitai), nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (ESV)

1Tim. 1:9-10 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality (arsenokoitai), enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, (ESV)

Summary Interpretation

Paul again rejects homosexuality when listing sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. Malakos is an adjective meaning "soft" or "weak." In the ancient world, the word was often used to denote men who were considered effeminate. Arsenokoites is translated, "ones who lie with males."

Whether or not the term, "arsenokoite," was uncommon, the meaning is clear. It is a compound word that literally means, "male" and "bed" in a sexual sense. It should be noted that Paul's list is mentioned in the bigger context of matters related to sexual propriety (1 Cor. 5-8). Paul was convinced that the only proper context for sexual intercourse was heterosexual marriage.

5. The Case of David and Jonathan

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. (1Sam. 18:1, ESV)

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. (2Sam. 1:26, ESV)

Pro-Gay Argument

David and Jonathan were homosexual lovers. This is also evidence that homosexuality lived out in a loving, committed, monogamous context is valid.

Response

“Love” did not have a sexual connotation in biblical times as it might in modern Western culture. There is no obligation to interpret the love between David and Jonathan as anything sexual in nature or anything more than the love that could exist between two heterosexual friends. Both David and Jonathan were married and fathered children, which lends credence to their heterosexuality.

As to whether homosexuality is valid in the context of loving and committed relationships, and it is only promiscuous homosexuality that is wrong, there is no biblical evidence for this argument, as the male-female union is held up as the only model of sexual behavior in the Bible.

SECTION 2: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

- We must pray (1 Thess 5:17). We must pray for ourselves in how we respond, and we must pray for those who are dealing with homosexuality.
- We must look at our own sins and repent (Matt 7:3-5; 1 John 1:9).
- We must come alongside the homosexual with love. Christ welcomed all sinners, affirming them as persons of value in God’s sight. We should love and reach out to those who need Christ. “There is only one appropriate response to homosexuality: compassionate love, gentle truth and authentic humility.”²
 - We hope that a person who is struggling with homosexuality would seek forgiveness and healing from God. We hope that we could minister to that person in any way that we can.
 - We must never ever condone or commit any harm done to people living in homosexuality. On the contrary we should do what we can to come to the aid of the victimized and speak out against hateful attacks on people.
 - One question that has come up in our youth group is whether or not to participate in “Day of Silence,” a silent protest organized by GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) that takes place on school campuses. Its official, stated purpose is to protest anti-gay/lesbian bullying and harassment, but some may see this as an indirect endorsement of the gay lifestyle. Many Christian students are confused as to whether they should participate in this event. The church does not endorse participating

² Amy Tracy and Jim Ware, *Responding to Pro-Gay Theology*, Love Won Out Series pamphlet, Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family, p. 28.

or not participating, so each believer should make h/her decision based on h/her own conscience and guidance from God.

- “Love the sinner, hate the sin,” while true, is a cliché that we should avoid using outside the church, since many gay individuals are unable to separate their actions from their identity, and are thus unable or unwilling to process that statement. Another cliché, “God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve,” is overused and unhelpful in our opinion. Cliches, by nature, are used to represent one’s viewpoint in a catchy, succinct way, but they can often be insensitive, and they do nothing to help the Church address the issue and establish a dialogue with people with sensitivity and seriousness.
- We must courageously and in love proclaim God’s truth (Eph 4:15). Jesus was full of grace – full of love, mercy, gentleness and compassion, but He never compromised the truth (John 1:17).
 - Based on our exegesis of the biblical texts that speak on homosexuality, we conclude that God views homosexuality as sin and that it violates His divine design for sexual relations between a man and a woman. We do not support the assertion that homosexuality is an inborn trait. At the same time we acknowledge that homosexuality is rarely viewed as a conscious choice for many. We believe that those seeking physical or emotional gratification in homosexual relationships are depriving themselves of God’s best.
 - We also reject that homosexuality is justified in the context of loving, committed, romantic relationships. Homosexuality is no greater a sin than any other sin or sexual sin, like adultery or premarital sex. This truth is often restated among Christians to remind them not to judge others nor diminish their personal sins. Homosexuality is no greater sin than any other sin, however it is distinctive among most kinds of sin in that much of secular society and even a growing number of Christians do not see homosexuality as sin.
 - We maintain that marriage is an institution of God that should be between a man and a woman. We do not support same-sex marriage.
- We must stay keenly aware of the pro-gay movement. It is no longer about sexual ethics, and the battle is being waged in the context of basic freedoms and civil rights. It is difficult to summarize how far we should go politically in addressing the pro-gay movement, and each of us should seek God’s guidance for how we should respond. Again, it is important to remain an effective and loving witness for Christ.
- We concede the possibility of a believer who struggles with homosexuality. As with any sin, converts struggling with homosexuality should submit themselves under the lordship of Christ, seeking forgiveness and healing from God. Any believer who is struggling with habitual sin, in this case, homosexuality, and demonstrates no desire to change, should refrain from any regular, influential, and visible ministerial role in the church. We do not support the ordination of gay ministers.

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON WOMEN IN MINISTRY

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

In today's Christian churches, we have not reached a consensus on the role of women in church ministries. Some churches view male and female as sharing the same royal status in God's creation and in Christ's redemption. Hence, they should be given equal opportunities to develop their spiritual gifts and serve at their full capacity in the building up of the body of Christ. Some churches allow women to serve in many ministries except preaching or even teaching adult Sunday school. The reason for these differences in church ministry practice arises from a few perplexing Bible passages. Chinese Bible Church of San Diego firmly believes that the Bible has the absolute authority. We also believe that Bible truths are expressed through cultural media including language, tradition and social custom dating from contemporary history. Therefore, when we study a Bible passage, we must understand its cultural and historical context, as well as the translation from the original language. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we seek to understand the original intent of the biblical author and to develop interpretations that are consistent with the overall teaching of the Bible. We do our best to accurately interpret the Bible passage so that we are able to draw spiritual principles for modern day church application.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

- We believe that in God's creation, male and female carry the same essence, status, dignity and glory. Both male and female are equally bestowed to undertake God-given responsibility to govern His creation.
- We believe that Christ is the head of the church, His body, and all members, male or female, are to love one another, and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. However, men and women in leadership must demonstrate in family living the demand as set forth in Ephesians 5:21-25 for husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to their own husbands.
- We believe that women should be given opportunities to exercise their gifts and serve together with brothers including preaching, teaching, and leading to build up the body of Christ.

SECTION ONE: BIBLICAL TEACHING

1. On the Creation of Male and Female

We believe in the beginning God created male and female in His own image (Gen. 1:27). Therefore men and women carry the same image of God. They are of the same essence and possess God's given dignity and glory. Although Eve was created after Adam and was the one tempted by Satan, it does not prove that she was secondary or less than Adam; God has claimed that all He had made was very good (Gen. 1:31) after making man and woman in the sixth day.

From Genesis 1:28 we also see that God had equally bestowed upon both male and female the responsibilities to manage His creation. Some theologians classify men to govern and women to reproduce. In Genesis 2:18, it states that woman was created to be the helper for man. Based on this verse, some theologians interpret the essence of a

woman to be secondary or lower in class than man and not equal in terms of undertaking mission from God. However, in the Hebrew language, the word “helper” often refers to comrades on the battle field or an alliance relationship. There was never an intention for classifications (Deut. 33:29; Ps. 118:7). We also believe when God made male and female according to His own image (Gen. 1:27), both genders represent different attributes of God’s character. In order to manifest the fullness of the image and the glory of God, the church must provide opportunities for men and women to fully utilize their spiritual gifts without any man-made limitations. Otherwise, God’s image and glory would be diminished.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:27)

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. (Gen. 1:31)

After making Adam and Eve, God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Gen. 1:28)

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Gen. 2:18)

Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will trample down their high places. (Deut. 33:29)

The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. (Ps. 118:7)

2. On Women’s Role at Home

Because one man sinned, sin came into this world and the earth was cursed (Rom. 5:12). Sin has also entered the human heart, causing the break-down of the relationship between human and God, and destroying the harmonious relationship between men and women. After Adam and Eve’s fall, God pronounced the consequence of a broken and distorted relationship between the male and female: The LORD said to the woman “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” (Gen. 3:16). While the word “desire” is good in the context of a mutually loving relationship as in Songs 7:10 “I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me,” in the context of sin and consequences as in Gen 4:7 “But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master (rule over) it,” the “desire” becomes a kind of control over another. Thus, beginning with this very first human couple, the oneness between the husband and wife was impaired, resulting in a power struggle between the sexes.

Nevertheless, in Jesus Christ marital relationship has been redeemed. Eph. 5:21-25 illustrates how this can be realized by patterning their relationship after that between Christ and His church: “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...” (Eph. 5:22-23, 25). As the wife submits to her husband, there is no longer a need for the husband to rule over her; and with the husband loving his own wife and the wife “desiring” her own husband, a mutually loving relationship is reestablished as in Songs 4:10.

In Greek, the word “head” not only implies authority, but also source and provision. On the other hand, the word “submit” implies ranking oneself under another. In the fallen world, men often neglect the aspect of being the source and provision but overly focus on the aspect of being the authority to “rule over” their wives; while women, being under authority, resolve to “desiring” their husbands by emotionally manipulating them into getting their own ways. The model of Christ Jesus loving the church by laying down His life for her, and the church submitting to Him in everything as her head needs to be brought back into marital relationships so as to avoid the natural sinful tendency of husbands controlling their wives and wives manipulating their husbands.

In other words, for the husband, to be the head is not about being admired and served, but about nourishing and loving their own body. For the wife, submission is not about reluctantly allowing her husband to “rule over” her, but about ranking herself under her husband out of respect for him in reverence for Christ. Therefore, in marriage there is not one higher or lower than the other, because the husband and wife are already joined as one body. It is important to note that both the “love” of the husband and the “submission” of the wife must be self-imposed rather than imposed on them by others.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. (Rom. 5:12)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Eph.5:21-25)

How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume more than any spice! (Song. 4:10)

3. On Women’s Role in Church Ministry

In Galatians 3:27-28 Paul said “for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Because of the redemptive work done by Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit, God gave all who accept Jesus as their personal savior and the title as God’s children. This title is for all who repent and being baptized, male or female, young or old. God also gives gifts of the Holy Spirit to his people, male or female. Everyone can and should exercise their God given spiritual gifts to serve each other and to build up the body of Christ - God’s church. Therefore, in the church no matter male or female all shall make effort to seek after the spiritual growth as well as exercise spiritual gifts so that we can build up each other.

Ever since the first century church till now, countless female believers became great witnesses to God’s work. Not only had they been serving the generation at that time but also made great impact to generations thereafter. A good example is deaconess Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2. The apostle Paul strongly recommended to Roman churches Phoebe the deaconess. In the same passage Paul also mentioned Priscilla as his fellow worker in Christ (Rom. 16:3). She had built her faith solidly in the Truth to a point that when she heard “a learned man” Apollos’ teaching about Jesus she was able to recognize the incompleteness and explained to him the way of God more adequately (Acts 18:24-26). In addition, the Bible mentioned the four unmarried daughters of Philip that they prophesied in

Acts 21:8-9. The use of word “prophesied” in English means preaching. Therefore all sisters who serve in different church ministries should be able to fully exercise their God given spiritual gifts and be a good stewardship to these gifts. At the same time church leadership should acknowledge and affirm sisters who are involved in different church ministries. Thus the body of Christ may be built up in the love of Christ who is our head so that the body of Christ may bring Glory to God.

While recognizing all persons, members or leaders at church, wives or husbands at home, share the same essence and glory image of God, for ministries and leadership at church and at home to be effective, authorities must be respected, as Scriptures affirm: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account” (Heb. 13:17). Jesus is our best example to follow, both in terms of one in submission to authority as well as one in a position of authority. For example, in essence, the Son and the Father are the same, but in the aspect of work and government, the Son chose to submit to the Father by coming to earth to fulfill the salvation plan. As Phil 2:5-8 affirms: “Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross.

On the other hand, as one in position of authority, Jesus took the attitude of a servant leader, as in His washing of His disciples’ feet. The episode began with “Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love” (Jn. 13:1). After the feet washing, He said to his disciples, “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (Jn. 13:13-15). In the same episode as recorded by Luke, He said to His disciples, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.... But I am among you as one who serves (Lk. 22:25-27).

In other words, “submit to one another” as applied to ministry can be practiced by obeying the authority of those, male or female, in ministry positions; and “love one another” as applied to ministry can be practiced by those in positions of authority, male or female, through serving those under them. By holding to such an attitude of Christ in our ministry, unity in the body of Christ and in the home can be achieved.

¹I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant^[a] of the church in Cenchræa. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me. (Rom. 16:1-2)

³Greet Priscilla^[a] and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 16:3)

²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor^[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:24-26)

⁸Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. (Acts 21:8-9)

4. On Women Preaching

First Corinthians 14:34-36 is the passage the Apostle Paul responding to the Corinthian church regarding the issue of women talk when believers were gathering. In the context, we observe that Paul mainly was teaching about the appropriate order at church gathering. During that particular time women had no social status and most women were uneducated. Thus, raising questions in public was culturally improper for women; whereas seeking help from their husbands was. It is very likely that at the gathering time women often raised questions or gave inappropriate comments that interrupted the order of worship. Therefore Paul requested these women to learn about the Truth at home from their husbands. When it comes to the time of church worship, they should remain silent to enable others worship or study. In the immediate previous passage, Paul allowed women to preach as long as they had their head covered (1Cor. 11:5). Hence in this passage he will not contradict himself by forbidding women to speak in public. Therefore we believe that this passage deals with the order of worship and does not apply to modern time women serve in preaching ministries.

First Timothy 2:11-15 is another passage that often brings controversy toward women preaching. In verse 12 Paul said “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man...” Without studying the cultural context it indeed seems like a strict command over all women. However, in this particular epistle Paul was dealing with the situation in the city of Ephesus where young Timothy was the pastor. From Acts 19:23-28 we learned that the Artemis goddess worship was the main influence in that society. In general women were considered lower than men in social status, but in the city of Ephesus because of this goddess worship women gained much power in terms of social influence. In this epistle there are quite a few responses (1Tim. 1:3-7; 4:1-3; 5:11-15; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:6-8) that gave us reasons to believe that female believers in Ephesians church were led astray because they did not carefully study the Truth. They were lack of discernment between the Truth and cults. Not only had they tended easy to follow the cult but also influence their husbands to follow them. Facing this situation, Paul upheld the Truth by commanding these women to stop spreading false teachings and learn in quietness and obey their husbands. Thus it would avoid what had happened to Eve in the Garden of Eden, where she believed in partial truth presented by the snake. After that she led her husband astray from God’s command. Therefore, we believe this passage deals with women of that particular time who could not discern the Truth. This should not apply to our modern day women in the ministry of preaching.

³⁴women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. ³⁵If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. ³⁶Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? (1Cor. 14:34-36)

⁵And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. (1Cor. 11:5)

¹¹A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵But women^[a] will be saved^[b] through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. (1Tim. 2:11-15)

²³About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. ²⁵He called them together, along with the workmen in related

trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. ²⁶And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. ²⁷There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." ²⁸When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:23-28)

³As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. ⁵The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. (1Tim. 1:3-7)

¹The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ²Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. ³They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. (1Tim. 4:1-3)

¹¹As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹²Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. (1Tim. 5:11-15)

³If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. (1Tim. 6:3-5)

⁶They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, ⁷always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. (2Tim. 3:6-8)

SECTION TWO: IMPLICATIONS TO CHURCH PRACTICE

Summarizing Biblical principles mentioned above, we believe that in church ministries, women and men are equal and shall be encouraged to serve in ministry according to their spiritual gifts to meet the church needs under the church leadership for building up the body of Christ. The role and contributions of women in Christ to the church ministries shall be acknowledged by all, just as men in Christ have been acknowledged. Therefore, the practicing principle of CBCSD is that women can preach, lead Bible studies and teach adult Sunday school. Women may also be department leaders of various church ministries. Women may be considered to be deaconesses or pastors in order to fulfill the fullness and glory of God's creation in both male and female. As individuals, male or female shall always remain humble and obedient as exercise our God-given spiritual gifts in church ministries. Our gifts

and passion toward any specific ministry shall also be recognized and affirmed by co-workers and church leadership.

CBCSD THEOLOGICAL POSITION PAPER ON DOING BUSINESS IN CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

By Pastoral Staff of CBCSD

1. The purpose of the church is to worship the true God, spread the gospel, nurture disciples, and foster mutual help among Christians. We must make our best effort to preserve this pure purpose and to prevent any other purpose or attempts from adulterating this purpose. A church is where believers of Christ worship God and exchange simple communications. For these reasons, the church should adhere to the scriptural principle stated in First Corinthian 10, 10:23: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” Brothers and sisters cannot conduct business activities in church activities and venues or using any church's resources (e.g. church directories, email groups, social networks, and information exchange platforms - WhatsApp, LINE, and WeChat etc.).
2. Brothers and sisters should not actively promote products or services to one another and the seeker friends. If someone takes the initiative to inquire, they can talk at other times and places according to the principle of mutual help. Brothers and sisters who accept products or services should also be aware that those who provide services may not be disadvantaged.
3. The multi-level marketing MLM/direct selling activities which focus on recruiting members to the scheme are easy to overlap with the interpersonal networks of the church. Therefore, no matter how good the products and services are, the pure relationship between brothers and sisters will be compromised. The believers will lose their mutual trust. Thus church leaders (pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers, ministry leaders, fellowship & small group leaders and co-workers, and their spouses) should try to avoid MLM/direct sales. The brothers and sisters who engage in MLM/direct sales must be careful not to use the relationship between the members, through caring and evangelizing opportunities, as a platform for MLM/direct marketing activities. For example, inviting people to have a meal at home and then to conduct MLM/direct sales activities.

Appendix

Doing Business in Christian Community

Pastor Albert Lam

Owning a business is not a wrongdoing. Many God-loving Christians run their business with honesty. They sincerely take care of their customers' needs without putting profit above all else. As a result, they have earned a good reputation, and their business continues to prosper. These Christians give one tenth of their earnings as tithes to God, some offering even more than one tenth, to support mission or charity work. This is truly a very good thing.

However, we need to discuss one concern here, and that is how to view and manage marketing activities (also called direct-marketing) that are carried on in church. Some say that it is not a problem; others say these activities should not be allowed. Still others say we should keep one eye open, one eye shut and not take the matter too seriously. Everybody seems to take a different stand on this issue.

Why is this issue so controversial?

Why is the matter concerning marketing activities in the church so controversial? I think the following are the reasons:

First, a church is a sanctuary for worshipping God. It is also where gospels are preached and spirituality is nurtured. As such, it should not be used for money grabbing and profit seeking. Doesn't the Bible say, "You cannot serve God and Mammon" (Luke 16:13)?

Second, the relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ is built on the simple basis of "mutual help and mutual love." We care about a person simply because of the inspiration and example of Jesus Christ's love, not because we intend to conduct a business transaction with him/her. If our intentions are profit-seeking, the nature and form of the relationship among Christians will be doomed to change, resulting in endless troubles.

Third, if the marketing technique is multilevel marketing (commonly known as "Mice's Meeting"), and if the marketer takes advantage of the "mutual trust" among Christians to achieve his/her marketing goal through the "network," then the consequences will be terrifying: "the network of love" will turn into "the network of marketing." Many aspiring Christians come to church because they are tired of society's profit-dominating culture and wish to seek spiritual purity and uncontaminated exchanges among people. But they soon realize that there is no difference between church and society—both being infested with profit-seeking people competing with one another in sophisticated sweet and exaggerated talk. How can anyone find Jesus Christ and embrace Him in such an environment?

Fourth, during these direct-marketing business transactions, both the buyer and the seller may be sincere, but after the transaction the buyer (or the one receiving service) often feels dissatisfied (The price being too high, the service being inadequate, and even the feeling of having been cheated). But, considering the "brothers and sisters" relationship and the fact that at the time of the transaction both the buyer and the seller felt good about the transaction, the buyer is both afraid and embarrassed to complain to the seller. Yet, full of resentment, the

buyer may confide in other members of the church just to air the grievance. This “airing” can easily turn into gossip, which eventually reaches the ear of the seller, who feels that the buyer deliberately denigrates him/her behind his/her back with the intention to damage the his/her reputation. This reaction may instantly trigger a war of words, bringing about turmoil in the church and resulting in the defeat of both parties. As a consequence, the church’s testimonies will also suffer a great loss.

Suggestions to the church

What was described above is not an isolated incidence. Rather, it is a frequent occurrence. Therefore, pastors, elders, and executive committee members should pay special attention to this matter, lest Satan might take advantage of this opportunity to attack the church. Here are some suggestions for your reference:

1. The purpose of the church is to worship the true God, spread the gospel, nurture disciples, and foster mutual help among Christians. We must make our best effort to preserve this pure purpose and to prevent any other purpose or attempts from adulterating this purpose.
2. If you are the “seller” (Regardless of whether what you sell is a product or a service), even if you are an honest business person who sincerely wants to help brothers and sisters to purchase good-quality products or services, it is not appropriate to approach them for marketing purposes. We don’t want them to misunderstand our love and sincerity. If you are a leader in the church (a pastor, a pastor’s wife, an elder, an elder’s wife, an executive member, an executive member’s wife, a Sunday-School teacher, committee chairs, etc.), you should be especially careful, because such a leader in the church will be, more likely than not, perceived as a person with “power” in the church. You should, therefore, be vigilantly avoiding being misunderstood as someone who uses his/her power for personal gain. If brothers and sisters approach you for a purchase or service, then you can discreetly handle the transaction, but you may not use the church to promote your business in order to elevate your status.
3. Marketing/direct-marketing activities are built on a network of human relations. The first thing you learn from your company’s trainer is that you market to your family, relatives, friends, and coworkers. Why? Because the elements of “mutual trust” already exist in your relationship with these people, and so it is easier for you to succeed. If marketing takes place in the church, the mutual trust that pre-exists in the relationship among brothers and sisters will immediately change into the way to gain profit. This instant gain will enlarge the marketing network, not to mention the fact that everyone can engage in this business—the employed, the unemployed, those who have to keep office hours, housewives, professors, and students. All of a sudden, the church becomes the most popular place where everybody has a stake in marketing. As a consequence, the spiritual nature of the church will undergo a seismic change. Every new friend and every new relationship may become an opportunity for marketing. Once a new friend realizes that the motive behind the warm reception of him/her is to sell a product or service to him/her and that the invitation for him/her to join the church is to lay the foundation for a marketing network, he or she would hesitate to join the church, regardless of whether he/she has embraced Jesus

Christ as his/her savior. The work of spreading the gospel will be negatively affected; so will the name of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

1. Those brothers and sisters who are engaged in marketing or direct marketing must be careful. Do not use the relationship with other members of the church as a platform for marketing activities, such as inviting brothers and sisters to your home for a meal for the purpose of selling your products or services, etc.
2. Brothers and sisters who engage in marketing should avoid approaching other members of the church to sell any products or services. If they have heard about the good quality of your products or services and ask you for your business card or product brochures, you can tell them to meet you at another time and place to discuss what you are marketing. A church is where believers of Christ worship God and exchange simple communications.
3. Marketing activities can easily complicate the networking of church members. Therefore, regardless of how good the products or services are, marketing will alter the relationships among brothers and sisters. And the mutual love and mutual help among them will also be adversely affected. For these reasons, the church should adhere to the scriptural principle stated in First Corinthians 10, 10:23: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” Advise brothers and sisters to avoid participating in marketing activities in the church.

Albert Lam, author of this article, graduated from Westminster Seminary. This article was originally published in Behold, no. 80, November 30, 2016.