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## BridgeWay Christian Church Philosophy of Ministry

A philosophy of ministry is an organized statement of purpose for why the local church exists and how it is to serve the Lord. It is a blueprint that serves the church in developing a particular vision statement for the church as a whole, as well as for individual ministries. A philosophy of ministry helps streamline the activities of the church by presenting a guide which helps determine if a ministry or method appropriately fits into the Word of God and how the Lord is working in His church. The following areas are those which BridgeWay Christian Church upholds as essential for an effective ministry in the local Church.

### Leadership:

It is clear in Scripture that biblical leadership is more aptly characterized as *service*. Leaders, in our view at BCC, must exhibit servitude by committing their lives to helping others, and especially in laboring for the spiritual good of all people. Christ conveyed this truth to his disciples who competed with one another over who would be greatest in the Kingdom:

“Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your *servant*, and whoever wants to be first must be your *slave*—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, *but to serve*, and to give his life as a ransom for man” (Matt. 20:26-28, emphasis added).

Since God is not in need of our service (Acts 17:25) we serve Him best by serving our neighbor (Matt. 25:31-46). Leaders, therefore, are not to exert their authority or lord it over others. Our success as pastors will be measured only by how we give of ourselves in service to Him who has called us (1 Pet. 4:2b-3). Moreover, leaders must avoid self-promotion—which feeds the fallen ego—and instead focus on *humility* and biblical *servanthood*. In the words of John the Baptist, “[Christ] must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30).

Leaders should be first and foremost be concerned with shepherding the local church by accurately and clearly teaching the Scriptures. Contrary to the prevailing tide in many market-driven congregations, a leader’s primary function is not to induce people to faith by pragmatic methodology but by “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 3:15 KJV). Although pragmatics may benefit the local church on occasion, we would do well to note that it is God who calls the lost unto salvation and not the salesmanship or flamboyant personalities of church leaders.

Biblical leaders are to be “shepherds of God’s flock ... serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be” (1 Pet. 5:2). This “shepherding” involves several things:

- *Knowing the sheep*: Jesus said of his Father, “He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out” (John 10:3). When God gathers His sheep, Christ leads on ahead, “and his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (v. 4). Effective Church leaders, therefore, know the sheep and look after them. As leaders, we are called to reach out to those unknown among the brethren and bring them into the intimate fellowship in the local church.

- *Feeding the Sheep*: The Scripture places the ability to teach and shepherd on the list of qualifications for an elder. Jesus required this of Peter as a condition for his reinstatement (cf. John 21:15-20). Leaders should be required to do *some* Bible teaching, conducive to their own spiritual gifts and personality strengths.
- *Overseeing the Sheep*: Oversight is part of the biblical prerequisite of an elder or qualified leader. It requires vigilance. Leaders should assist the pastor in the supervision of the church and its logistical and spiritual responsibilities.

### **Counseling:**

Jesus Christ, through the Word of God, is sufficient for all our spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs. The writer of Hebrews tells us that the Word of God “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). These two words, “thoughts” and “attitudes,” cover the motivations of man and his deepest values. The Word of God, we are told, is said to be fully capable of passing judgments on the most hinder parts of man’s nature. When counseling from the office of the pastorate, we must allow the Bible to speak for us as our surgical tool in therapy.

Modern psychology, both secular and Christian, is culpable at times for devaluing the power of Christ in the hearts and minds of broken people. Replacing the Bible with the world’s wisdom—that is, pop-psychology—is clearly an attack upon the person of Jesus Christ and the power of God’s Word to provide healing. The Lord is certainly competent to judge and correct the deepest issues that beset his very own creatures. The assertion that the wisdom of God’s Word cannot compete with the wisdom of the world on the clinical level is total absurdity.

The leadership of the local church must know how to apply the Scriptures to the deep problems of the congregation. We offer an all-sufficient Christ. It is to His glory that He brings healing to broken lives. Elders, leaders and pastors should be fully trained and willing to lead people to the source of all wisdom and spiritual healing, Jesus Christ.

### **Discipleship:**

New believers need to know immediately that Christ has saved them for his glory. To this end, they should be instructed in the Christian life and prepared to follow Christ in baptism. This instruction should be a combination of corporate (classes) and individual (personal discipleship) participation. New believers should never be left to their own devices anymore than infants should be left to care for themselves or to determine what to eat. We are not fulfilling the Great Commission given by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 unless we nurture believers to maturity.

New believers should be instructed as soon as possible concerning what the Bible teaches about their responsibilities to Christ, the Bible, and to one another. When new members are challenged to serve, and then enabled to do so, they seldom move on to another church. Such newly integrated believers are fulfilling Christ’s purpose for their lives and thereby provide blessing to others.

When a person comes into a local church he is coming to be part of the family. In the same way that any normal family adjusts itself to the newborn, the church needs to stretch to accommodate its newborns. A growing church will be in a state of change just as much as a young family of childbearing age.

Our young people are not the future of the Church. They *are* the Church, every bit as much as adults. Every parent knows that their newborns are full members of the family. This

does not mean that they are competent to take on the responsibilities of the family right away. In the same way that we train our own children to grow to maturity and to assume the responsibilities of adulthood, we must also disciple our Christian young people to spiritual maturity. Christian education should never be just entertainment or ‘baby-sitting.’ Children can and do rise to the expectations we have of them. Youth ministry should therefore be disciple-making in nature. Children and new converts should be taught the Bible in-depth and challenged to put it into practice in their homes and schools.

The church should assist families and never take their place. Youth leaders and staff, therefore, should practice turning “the hearts of children toward their fathers” (Mal. 4:6). Programs, events, and socials should all revolve around the teaching of the Word of God and the fellowship of the young people with Christ and with one another.

Because service is an integral part of the Christian life, the church should search constantly for ways to involve the young people in the service of the local church. Since young people are capable of doing many things, the church needs to make them into fully functioning members and strive to train them for individual and corporate leadership, in accord with a young person’s spiritual gifts and divine calling.

Service within the local church is a vital part of the Christian life. No Christian can ever be fully obedient to Christ without serving. Most believers fear service because they view themselves incapable. Part of the membership process is to identify every available area of service within the local church and match each new believer or member to it. Gifts like “helps” and “mercy” have almost infinite applications and manifestations within the local assembly. Generally, once people realize that they can serve God in a meaningful and spiritual way with the gifts they possess, they will be rewarded by their participation within the congregation.

Discipleship is the process of taking people to Christian maturity through the renewing of their minds (Rom. 12:1-2). Consequently, “Equipping Classes” should be offered at various times throughout the week to meet the spiritual needs of a variety of brothers and sisters who are at different stages of their Christian walk. These classes should provide the elders the opportunities that they also need to serve in the teaching and shepherding roles that God has called them to.

Outreach brings the step of discipleship full circle. The brother or sister who was reached at the beginning of this process, disciplined thoroughly via the Word of God (corporately and individually) is now fully integrated into the body and trained to do outreach. Stated differently, the disciple has now become a disciple-maker.

### **Equipping the saints:**

The Bible makes it clear that one of the primary purposes of the Church is to equip the saints. The apostle Paul wrote:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, *to prepare God’s people for works of service*, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph. 4:11-16, emphasis added).

If we neglect the feeding and building up of the local church the universal Church will be weak and easy prey for the enemy. It is, therefore, imperative that the local church teach and preach directly from the Word of God at all times. It is the Scripture and the Holy Spirit who changes lives and equips us to be approved workmen who do not need to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).

In order to make disciples we must instruct men and women in the Word of God. The ministry of the spiritually effective church will balance its service and ministries through a Scriptural understanding of its purpose. Ultimately, the saints are to be equipped in order to glorify Christ through the Holy Spirit.

### **Evangelism:**

As a church body, our command is clear in Scripture: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you,” (Matt. 28:18-20). When Jesus spoke these words he made it clear that there is an authority granted by God to Christ to save the world. He, in turn, passed that on to the Church as His ambassadors. However, it should be noted that the purpose of the local church is not to primarily evangelize but to glorify God through worship, Bible teaching, and the instrumentation of the sacraments. Evangelism is a component of the local church ministry (and a privilege we are obliged to carry out) but is not trump Bible preaching and worship..

As the local church builds up and equips the saints she must also teach her members to reach out to the lost. There are neighbors, co-workers and family members who need to know the truth of the gospel. It follows, then, that the church should encourage evangelism through prayer for the lost, training on how to effectively witness, and provide regular opportunities for the lost to cross paths with the saved.

### **Worship:**

Worship is for God and it is what we offer to God. It is ultimately understood as our response to Him in respect to His power, holiness, righteousness, love, benevolence, forgiveness, grace, and mercy. In the recent past, worship has mutated into something that is about man. In the American church, particularly, it has incorrectly become entertainment for a “fast-food” culture.

We worship God not simply because of what He has done for us but because His splendor is worthy of our adoration. While it is certainly appropriate for us to express gratitude to those who sacrificially lead worship services, the primary focus of worship should never draw the attention to the worship leader or the talent of those administering the music. Our worship must be theocentric and not men-centered.

The preaching of the Word is the centerpiece of acceptable worship because, unlike anything else we do, the proclamation of the Word calls men and women to respond to God.

Music allows us to respond emotionally and outwardly to God's glory. Preaching allows God to speak to us. Preaching should never be replaced or minimized in the worship offered by the local church. It is the powerful means by which we adore the Creator and through which He speaks to His creation (Rom. 1:16).

### **The Purpose of Bylaw sat BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

1. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church.
3. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.
5. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws are written in the concept of a theocracy (i.e. "divine guidance ... by officials who are regarded as divinely guided")<sup>1</sup> and *not* a democracy (i.e. "government by the people").<sup>2</sup>
6. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws give headship and final authority of approving decisions for the local church to the Senior Pastor and/or Governing Elder Board.
7. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws eradicates congregational voting.
8. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws do not subscribe to denominational forms of government.
9. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws provide accountability for the Senior Pastor by an internal group of like-minded but independent men of God.
10. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws help avoid potential conflicts and uprisings within the local church.
11. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws are written to the benefit of the Senior Pastor so that he can correctly govern the local church in the New Testament manner.
12. BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC) Bylaws allow the local church to mold its Statement of Faith more closely to its personal beliefs and vision.

## **Secular Bylaws of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

**A**ny persons aspiring to marry at BridgeWay Christian Church, or be involved in church leadership, at any level—especially with respect to working with minors—must be a member at BCC and endorse, both orally and practically, the theology of the church, together with its government, philosophy of ministry, vision, mission, and its ecclesiological and secular Bylaws, in accord with the governing laws of the State of New Hampshire.

### **ARTICLE 1: Human Sexuality**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication (premarital sex), adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Gen. 2:24; Gen 19:5, 13; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6-9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).

### **ARTICLE 2: Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at the moment of conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified taking of an unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 2015-18; Luke 1:44). We accept abortion only as a last resort when the mother's life is gravely endangered. We deem this to be an unfortunate but perhaps necessary act of self-defense.

### **ARTICLE 3: Lawsuits Between Believers**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the local church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. (In the case where the offending party refuses to seek repentance, submit to church authorities, or to make appropriate reparations to the persons or party offended, civil litigation remains an option). Pertaining to criminal matters, the local church reserves the right to invoke secular authorities in the event a crime is committed against one of its members by another Christian (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).

### **ARTICLE 4: Civil Government & Politics**

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respects and biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. Moreover, we believe it is a violation of biblical precept to endorse, sanction, or proselytize for any political party in the secular government (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).

## Ecclesiastical Bylaws of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)

### ARTICLE 5: Pastors, Elders, and Female Leadership at BCC

#### Section 1: Pastors; Professional Qualifications

BCC pastors must be apt to teach and to demonstrate the ability to instruct in doctrine (1 Tim. 3:2). A pastor who is prudent and of sound mind should naturally be able to communicate the Word of God effectively. His delight should be instructing the ignorant and correcting those who stray from biblical truth.

Secondly, BCC pastors are to hold fast to the Word of God (Tit. 1:9). They are not to introduce new revelations or doctrines contrary to what Scripture teaches. It is because he is a mature man of God that he should not compromise Scripture but will study with great care and diligence. Due to the influx of false teaching which permeates the universal Church today, the local church must make every effort to safeguard the congregation by assuring that qualified men assume the pastorate (cf. Acts 20:28). For this reason, BCC defines a pastor's qualifications as follows:

1. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board/volunteer staff—including those in senior or junior pastoral roles (i.e. teaching/preaching, worship, missions, youth, outreach and evangelism), together with those pastors/teachers who share in the general pulpit rotation—**must** attest to the call of God in their ministry and exemplify such spiritual gifts in the practice thereof.
2. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board/volunteer staff—including those in senior or junior pastoral roles (i.e. teaching/preaching, worship, missions, youth, outreach and evangelism), together with those pastors/teachers who share in the general pulpit rotation—are **encouraged** to have academic certification or to be in the process thereof.
3. All BCC pastors/teachers, at a minimum, are **encouraged** to have an undergraduate degree in biblical studies or Christian ministry, or in the process thereof, before overseeing a particular ministry.
  - a. Academic certification does not preclude participation by the laity in ministry as deacons or deaconesses but is recommended for formal oversight of a ministry or for pastoral recognition.
4. To safeguard against unstudied teaching, BCC shall not permit unapproved church members or itinerate speakers to assume regular pulpit responsibilities on more than two occasions in one calendar year, unless otherwise approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board. Such allowances are to be in a lay capacity only while under the oversight of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
5. The Senior Pastor position, together with the Associate Pastor position, is **required** to hold, at a minimum, an undergraduate degree in biblical studies or Christian ministry, or in the process of acquiring an undergraduate degree.
  - a. Missionaries and worship musicians are exempt from academic certification, although the specifications detailed in point 2 are binding in order to hold a pastorate over Missions and Worship.
  - b. Deacons and deaconesses in the laity who teach or oversee children's ministries are exempt from academic certification (up to but not including junior high

ministry), including special needs ministries, helps and services ministries, music and worship, community ministry, and extracurricular programs; unless otherwise approved by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

6. All adults (including BCC staff and volunteers) participating in Children’s Ministries—ranging from nursery age to senior high students—must pass a security background check with the state of New Hampshire before assuming regular duties.
7. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserve the right to consider the life experience, calling, spiritual gifts, and previous ministry work of any given applicant or intern in place of academic certification. Such a decision to grant an un-credentialed applicant ministry oversight, pastoral recognition, or pulpit teaching responsibilities beyond two occasions in one calendar year, must be reached by a unanimous decision by the board. If the applicant or intern is denied, he must be notified in writing within three days following the board’s decision.

## ***Section 2: Pastors; Personal Qualifications***

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 the apostle Paul records two seminal passages that speak about the qualifications for oversight within the local church. The moral, doctrinal, and social prerequisites for a pastor are put forth by the apostle as a very high standard to which the Lord calls His leaders to, and yet a standard which we as a church recognize cannot be fully attained in this life.

### *Morally Qualified*

Notwithstanding man’s abject failure to achieve perfect holiness, members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board are expected to be morally qualified. Although sinful by nature, both the laity and clergy are *positionally* holy and are to thus “live up to what we have already attained” (Php. 3:16). Members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, therefore, must be of good reputation and have moral standing within the church and local community.

Because a pastor is called to teach the morality of Scripture, he is expected to conduct his life with integrity. The moral qualifications for members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 as follows:

1. Husband of One Wife
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder must be faithful to his wife.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder adores his wife and does not invite flirtation with women other than his wife.
2. Practices Self-Control
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder is in control of his behavior, both privately and publicly.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder’s behavior does not control him.
3. Lives Wisely
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder makes good choices.
4. Hospitable
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder’s home is open to others.
5. Not Addicted to Wine
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder never gets drunk or over-indulges in alcohol.

6. Not Violent
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder resolves conflict peacefully.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder is not quick-tempered; his anger does not flare up at the least provocation.
7. Does Not Love Money
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder is not consumed with riches or acquiring a lucrative income through the advancement of the gospel.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder is expected to model before the congregation generous and faithful giving in his tithes and offerings. (By definition, a tithe is 10% of one's income).
8. Loves Peace
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder is someone who works toward harmony in every relationship.
9. Gentle
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder behaves in a manner that is not abrasive.
10. Not Arrogant
  - a. A BCC Pastor/Elder must be humble, thinking of others first.
  - b. A BCC Pastor/Elder exemplifies a servant's heart.

### *Doctrinally Qualified*

As noted in the preamble to Section 1, BCC pastors must be apt to teach (1 Tim. 3:2), that is, possess the ability to instruct in doctrine. A man that is prudent and of sound mind should naturally be able to communicate the Word of God. His delight should be instructing the ignorant and correcting those who stray from the truth of God's Word.

Secondly, BCC pastors are to hold fast to the faithful Word (Tit. 1:9). They are not to introduce new revelations or doctrines contrary to what Scripture teaches. It is because he is a mature man of God that he should not compromise Scripture, but to study with great care and diligence.

BCC pastors must teach sound doctrine both to exhort and convince cynics (Tit. 1:9). Not only is the pastor to encourage and disciple other believers by means of sound doctrine, but he must also correct and rebuke those who are teaching falsely. If he is aware of false teaching being taught among the church of God he is correct those who are spreading lies.

It is important to note that none of the biblical qualifications for BCC pastors are optional. This is proved by the word "must" that appears in Scripture before each of the qualifications. The reason for pastors to meet these requirements is so that they may "gain an excellent standing" among the flock and from without, "and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).

1. All BCC Pastors/Elders, including deacons, deaconesses, and small group leaders must unequivocally adhere to BCC's Statement of Faith.
2. All BCC Pastors/Elders, including deacons, deaconesses, and small group leaders, must subscribe unambiguously to the following essential Christian truths:
  - a. Monotheism as revealed in the Holy Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the one and only true God.
  - b. The Deity of Jesus Christ, as a separate person in the triune Godhead.

- c. The Deity of the Holy Spirit, as a separate person in the triune Godhead.
- d. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- e. The Bodily Return of Jesus Christ.
- f. Jesus Christ is the only means to Salvation.
- g. Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- h. Eternal Damnation (hell).
- i. Eternal Glory (heaven).
- j. The Divine Inspiration of the 66 Books of the Old and New Testaments.

### *Socially Qualified*

A BCC pastor must be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6). Literally, a BCC pastor is to be ‘a one-woman type of man.’ This does not necessarily mean that he needs to be a married man; but if so he is *not* to be a polygamist. To have one wife means to have one wife at one time. If a pastor’s wife dies he may remarry, but he is not to be a man who has divorced his wife to marry another. In the event a pastor is divorced, BCC will prayerfully apply the instructions listed in 1 Corinthians 7 in evaluating the circumstances on case-by-case basis.

Second, a BCC pastor is to rule his house well as the spiritual leader of his family (1 Tim. 3:4). He is the head of the household both by nature and by the will of God (Eph. 5:22). He does not rule over his household as a dictator, but governs the affairs of his home as a servant to his family.

Thirdly, a BCC pastor’s children are to be in subjection to him (1 Tim. 3:4) and are not accused of rebellion or being unruly (Tit. 1:6). His children are in submission to him as a spiritual authority, not in compulsion but out of respect earned from a godly example. If a BCC pastor cannot rule his own house, he cannot rule the church of God (1 Tim. 3:5).

### ***Section 3: Pastoral Ethics***<sup>3</sup>

Church ministers are obligated to live by a specific code of pastoral ethics. Each ministry and each minister is different. So these principles of pastoral ethics will be applied differently. An understanding of these basic principles will better define the expectation of BCC leadership.

#### *Confidentiality: for the body of believers*

1. We are committed to strict confidentiality in ministry except when information must be released in accordance with state law.
  - a. We will seek to apprise individuals of all mandated disclosures.
  - b. We are committed to confidentiality in ministry and consider a statement made in confidence a trust not to be shared unless with that individual’s written permission indicating informed consent to such a release.
2. Stewardship: *within the church and our personal lives*
  - a. We are committed to good stewardship in the church and will be totally forthright in all financial undertakings.
  - b. We will be honest and open in all of our financial dealings.
  - c. We will promptly pay all debts as soon as possible.
  - d. We will not use our position to gain any financial privilege or leverage.

- e. While we advocate adequate compensation for God’s servants, we do not expect or require honorariums for services rendered within normal duties.
  - f. We will be careful to guard our hearts against greed and materialism.
  - g. We view all contributions as gifts from the Lord that have been entrusted into our care.
    - i. Our responsibility is to spend those gifts as wisely as possible in continuing the ministry.
3. Professionalism: *to communicate the Word of God effectively*
- a. We are committed to accurately and skillfully communicating the Word of God, speaking the truth with conviction in love, and will acknowledge any extensive use of material prepared by someone else.
  - b. We are committed to honoring our fellow servants in God’s household.
  - c. We will not seek to build our ministries at the expense of other legitimate ministries.

#### ***Section 4: Women Leadership***<sup>4</sup>

Women excel in gifts of hospitality, mercy, teaching and helps. Much of the ministry of the church depends on women. Women in the church are not restricted to public praying or prophesying (1 Cor. 11:5), but are restricted from having spiritual and teaching authority over men. The Bible nowhere restricts women from exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit, although females are precluded from prophesying and speaking in tongues during the church service so as to maintain order (1 Cor. 14:34). Women, equally as men, are called to minister to others, to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and to proclaim the gospel to the lost (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:15).

First Timothy 2:11-12 proclaims, “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.” In the church, God assigns different roles to men and women. This is a result of the way mankind was created (1 Tim. 2:13) and the way in which sin entered the world (2 Tim. 2:14). God, through Scripture, restricts women from serving in roles of spiritual teaching authority over men. This precludes women from serving as pastors, which definitively includes preaching to, teaching, and having spiritual authority over men.

It is the position of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board that God has ordained only men to serve in position of spiritual leadership in the church. Formally, therefore, BCC governance is *complimentarian* and rejects on biblical grounds *egalitarian* rule. This is not because men are necessarily better teachers, or because women are inferior or less intelligent. It is simply how God designed the Church to function. Men are to set the example in spiritual leadership—in their home, their workplace, and both in word and deed. Women are to take a less authoritative role.

Women are encouraged to teach other women (Tit. 2:3-5). The Bible does not restrict women from teaching children. The only activity women are wholly restricted from is teaching or having spiritual authority over men. This logically, then, would include women serving as pastors. This does not make women less important, by any means, but rather gives them a ministry focus more in agreement with how God has gifted them.

1. Although excluded from pastoral recognition, women in lay leadership at BCC warrant the title of deaconesses (cf. Rom 16:1-2).

- a. Deaconesses include, but are not limited to, Women’s Ministry leadership, Children’s Ministry leadership (up to but not including Junior High Ministries), spiritual counseling for women, and helps and services ministries.
  - i. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to add to the list of female-led ministries as they deem appropriate by the Word of God.
- b. Deaconesses may address the corporate church under the authority of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board with messages that are considered to be geared toward women.
- c. Deaconesses may co-lead Sunday school class with deacons or their husbands particularly with lessons geared toward church membership, marital sexuality, and the institution of marriage.
- d. Deaconesses are expected to conduct their lives in accord with the moral principles stipulated in the New Testament.
- e. Deaconesses are *not* to be new converts or spiritually immature. Rather, deaconesses are to be doctrinally adept, socially qualified (above reproach), temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, not given to drunkenness or an excessive love for money, not violent but gentle, and have a good reputation with outsiders.
- f. All deaconesses are to fall under the headship of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and are subject to their leadership authority.

## **ARTICLE 6: Church Governance<sup>5</sup>**

The Lord is very clear in His Word about how He wishes His Church on earth to be organized and run. First, Christ is the head of the Church and its supreme authority (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18). Second, the local church is to be autonomous, free from any external authority or control, with right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Tit. 1:5). Third, the local church is to be governed by spiritual leadership consisting of two main offices—elders and deacons.

It is the interpretation of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board that the Bible teaches local church leadership as a plurality of elders who serve the local church. (Deacons and deaconesses, as lay leaders, are subject to the elders). Moreover, it is not contrary to this plurality of elders to have one elder serving in the major “pastoral” role. God calls some as pastor/teachers (even as He called some to be missionaries in Acts 13) and gives them as gifts to the local church (Eph. 4:11). Thus, BCC may have many elders, but not all elders are necessarily called to serve in the pastoral role (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17). But, as a part of the elder board, the pastor or ‘teaching elder’ has no more authority in decision-making than any other elder.

1. Unless determined otherwise by the governing board of elders or if circumstances warrant further consideration, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall make no government decisions contingent upon congregational voting.
  - a. This does not preclude the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board from inviting feedback, opinions, or soliciting the advice of congregation members for any matter they deem necessary (whether formally or informally).
2. All local church matters shall be determined by vote among the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and recorded by the church administrator in the meeting notes.

3. A majority vote will be considered sufficient for a given proposal to pass.
4. A unanimous vote is necessary for church legislation to pass only in circumstances where the full BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board is not present.
  - a. If less than three-quarters of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board are present, no vote can be taken.
5. The active roster of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board will be reviewed in January of each year to determine whether a change, addition, or removal of a pastor/elder is warranted.

#### **ARTICLE 7: Church Finances/Treasury**

1. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, together with the church treasury office, shall conduct a budget meeting quarterly each fiscal year to review the active budget and ministry allotments as predetermined by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
2. The budget meeting shall be recorded by the church administrator and published in the meeting notes.
3. BCC shall disclose the church's financial books upon request to members in good standing or any governmental bodies properly credentialed.
4. The congregation as a whole shall receive a yearly update in writing of the church's financial standing for the previous year via the U.S. Post Office.
5. Each giver to BCC shall be given a year-end receipt that details their tax-exempt gifts and total year-to-date giving.
6. BCC shall be generous in supporting other ministries as the Lord prospers so as to keep an outward focus. Therefore, BCC shall tithe (10%) of the church's monthly intake to an outside ministry or ministries as deemed suitable by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
  - a. At the same time, this is not to be a legalistic requirement and is subject to change at the discretion of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board. It is to be a joyous celebration in response to the Lord's provision.

#### **ARTICLE 8: The Sacraments<sup>6</sup>**

Denominations often differ over the amount and the mode of the sacraments. Some recognize as many as seven sacraments; others have no sacraments in the life of the Church. BCC recognizes only two sacraments: (1) Baptism and (2) The Lord's Supper. Both sacraments are to be administered only to believers in Jesus Christ.

Before administering the sacraments to children, the main requirement for all children (as with all adults) is that they have surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Even though some children make this salvation decision at an early age, being baptized and partaking in the Lord's Supper should not be a flippant act. As a child matures in his faith and it is evident that he/she is truly born again, the father and/or mother should discern whether he/she is ready to receive the sacraments. The spiritual maturity level of one child differs from that of another, even in the same family.

*Baptism<sup>7</sup>*

Christian baptism, according to the Bible, is an outward testimony of what has occurred inwardly in a believer's life. Christian baptism, therefore, illustrates the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The Bible states:

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Rom. 6:3-4).

In Christian baptism, the action of being immersed in the water pictures being buried with Christ. The action of coming out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection and speaks to our walking in newness of life.

In Christian baptism, BCC recognizes two requirements before a person is baptized: (1) the person being baptized must confess allegiance to Jesus Christ as Savior, and (2) the person must understand what baptism signifies. If a person knows the Lord Jesus as Savior, understands that Christian baptism is a step of obedience in publicly proclaiming his faith in Christ, and desires to be baptized then there is no reason to dissuade baptism. According to the Bible, Christian baptism is simply a step of obedience; a public proclamation of one's faith in Christ alone for salvation and commitment to Him through His death, burial, and resurrection.

1. Because the word "baptize" is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptismos*, which means "to dip in or under water,"<sup>8</sup> baptism, by its inherent definition, shall be an act of immersion in water at BCC.
2. The water used for baptism shall be common to the location, and applied visibly and generously.
3. As there is one body, there is one baptism (Eph. 4:4-6). BCC recognizes all baptisms by immersion administered by other Protestant churches in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
4. All baptisms shall be administered by a confirmed Christian in the name of the Trinity; and applied to confessing believers only.
  - a. Based on Matthew 28:18-20, it is the position of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board that any true believer holds the authority to baptize, even as he has the authority from God to evangelize and teach all that Christ commanded.

Concerning an individual who was baptized before he/she became a Christian— (e.g. one who was baptized as an infant or baptized later in life but did not truly know Jesus as Savior)— such a person warrants re-baptism. BCC holds the view that baptism is a post-salvation act. The symbolism of baptism is lost if a person has not truly experienced salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

Second, in the case of those who were baptized after faith in Christ, but in a method other than immersion, such a person can consider re-baptism. Again, the word 'baptize' means "to dip in or under water." However, the Bible nowhere specifically addresses those who have been baptized but not immersed. This issue, then, is a matter of conscience for a believer in light of his/her personal relationship with God. A believer who has been baptized unbiblically should ask the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5). If the believer remains uncertain, it would be best to go ahead and be rebaptized biblically to put the conscience at ease (Rom. 14:23).

## *The Lord's Supper*<sup>9</sup>

The Lord's Supper is to be administered only to believers in Jesus Christ. It is not stated in Scripture that a person must be baptized before being able to receive the Lord's Supper. (Baptism is intended to be an identifying mark of believers in Christ. Therefore, some churches require water baptism before a person can partake of the Lord's Supper). However, the same requirement for baptism holds true for participating in Communion: salvation through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. BCC defines Open Communion as allowing professing believers other than members of our local church to receive communion, contingent upon an evangelical declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.
  - a. Communion at BCC is open to all believers in Jesus Christ regardless of whether or not they are members of BCC.
2. BCC defines Closed Communion as restricting the partaking of the elements to believers in Jesus Christ only.
  - a. Communion at BCC is closed to non-believers.
3. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall not rush to judgment concerning the salvation or profession of faith of an individual wishing to take communion above and beyond his/her profession at the Communion table.
4. If the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board suspects that potential desecration of the Lord's Table is occurring by the participation of an unbeliever, the matter is to be addressed privately between the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board and the offender

## **ARTICLE 9: Church Membership**

Any baptized Christian who has completed the BCC Membership Class is eligible for membership with BCC. (The church reserves the right, however, to postpone or reject membership at the discretion of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board). A member in good standing is a member who registers his/her attendance, provides identifiable financial support, contributes to the church, and demonstrates continued interest and loyalty.

1. *BCC Membership Class*—A mandatory series of classes for prospective members where they will learn about BCC, our history; theology; government; and beliefs and practice about worship and finances.
  - a. Each active attendee shall be required to complete the BCC Membership class before submitting a membership application form to the church administrator.
    - i. Wherein signing the church membership application form, he/she affirms a credible declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and to support the church with his/her time, faithful attendance, tithes and talents, and to submit to the leadership of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board with a 'teachable spirit.'
  - b. Each membership applicant will be required to sign a copy of the BCC Bylaws, Doctrinal Statement, Mission Statement, and Vision/Constitution as a written

declaration/adherence to the items of note contained herein and shall be filed with the church administrator along with a membership application form.

- c. The application shall be reviewed by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, and approved (or rejected).
2. *Membership List*—The list of members in good standing shall be maintained by the church administrator, who shall report changes quarterly to the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.
3. *Membership Review*—The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall review the membership list in the month of January of each year.
  - a. A member who does not have registered attendance, identifiable financial support, definite service contribution, or demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the list of members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive members.
  - b. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall notify this member in writing that he/she has been placed on a list of inactive members and is not eligible to vote on any business issue *that the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board decide to open to the church* (see Church Governance).
  - c. If the inactive member has not attended service, provided identifiable financial support, and demonstrated further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately following notification, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board reserves the right to drop any such member from the local church membership roll.
  - d. The inactive member may be restored to the list of active members in good standing by a majority decision of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board without public reception.
  - e. The inactive member who is not restored during the period of two (2) months immediately following notification shall be considered a former member.
    - i. A former member may be restored to the list of active members in good standing, or inactive members, after meeting the criteria for membership.
4. *Right to Appeal*—A decision by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board to drop an inactive member from active church membership may be appealed by the inactive member. The decision of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board is final.
  - a. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the inactive member is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church *that the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board decide to open to the church* (see Church Governance).
    - i. Appeal process—The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the BCC administrator within thirty (30) days following the date when the inactive member was dropped from the church membership roll.
    - ii. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision at their discretion.
    - iii. Should the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board sustain its earlier decision and the inactive member wishes the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board Meeting for the purpose of considering the appeal.
    - iv. The inactive member can appeal the church's decision up to two (2) times before the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board decision is made permanent.

## **ARTICLE 10: Church Discipline/Excommunication**

BCC recognizes two forms of church discipline: 1) formative; and 2) corrective. *Formative Discipline* is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercising of other ministries in the church through which the people are conformed to the image of Christ. Conversely, *Corrective Discipline* occurs when a member is found in sin, and the church seeks his/her repentance and restoration “to the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom. 1:5).

Any member of BCC who is victim of an offense should go privately to the offender to seek a resolution to the matter (cf. Matt.5:23-24; 18:15-17). If the matter is unresolved, either because the accused denies wrongdoing or refuses to repent, the second step is to ask one or two members of the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board to join the reconciliation process. The third step is to encourage the church to go to the offender individually and seek his/her restoration. If the offender will not listen to individual church members, further corrective discipline will be employed by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

1. Corrective Discipline is a result of imperfection and a tendency to sin and to cause offense. Every effort should first be made, therefore, to clear up difficulties and remove offenses before church action is taken publicly.
  - a. If, in the opinion of the church leaders, the matter merits further consideration, the entire BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board may then be informed of the facts.
2. Corrective Discipline shall not to be entered into lightly. It shall be corrective in its nature. The intention shall be that the erring member will be brought to full restoration within the church.
3. Corrective Discipline is warranted when a member of BCC conducts themselves in contradiction to, whether orally or practically, the statutes contained in the Word of God as numerated in the theology, government, philosophy, vision, mission, and ecclesiological and secular Bylaws of BCC.
4. Corrective Discipline may include individual confrontation and admonition by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board, and it may possibly extend to excommunication from the membership of the church by recommendation of the elders.
  - a. A unanimous vote by the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall be needed for excommunicating a church member.
  - b. A non-church member does not qualify for excommunication.
  - c. An excommunicated church member shall be removed from the list of members in good standing and placed on a list of former members.
5. The BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board may recommend different kinds of discipline in accordance with the offense. Some cases, which may not be adjudged as deserving of excommunication, may entail suspension from ministry within BCC or abstinence from the Lord’s Supper. At the end of the suspension, the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board shall determine whether the member shall be restored to good standing because of evidence of repentance and right living, or whether further corrective measures shall be imposed.
6. Corrective Discipline shall always occur in person and by a team of at least two qualified leaders from the BCC Pastoral Staff/Elder Board.

7. Corrective discipline will be carried out under the authority and guidance of pertinent Scriptures including, but not limited to: Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-8, Galatians 6:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
8. The purpose and practice of Corrective Discipline shall be:
  - a. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the disciplined party.<sup>10</sup>
  - b. For the instruction in righteousness and the good of other Christians as an example to them.<sup>11</sup>
  - c. For the purity of the church as a whole.<sup>12</sup>
  - d. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians.<sup>13</sup>
  - e. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

## **Doctrinal Statement of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

### **I. GOD’S WORD (THE HOLY BIBLE)**

We believe the Holy Bible is the eternal Word of God in both the Old and New Testaments, transmitted by plenary inspiration through men who were “carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). We regard the Scriptures as the supreme authority concerning all matters of life, faith, conduct, teaching, and training (cf. Psalm 119:89; Matt. 24:35; John 17:17; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:19).

### **II. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD**

We believe there is only one true and living God who is perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, discipline, and love. We believe that within the hyperstatic union of God, there are three eternal and co-equal Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although One in nature and substance, They hold distinct roles in creation, providence and redemption.

We believe God concerns Himself with the affairs of men; hears and answers our prayers; and saves us from sin and death when we come to Him through repentant faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Gen. 1:1, 26; Deut. 6:4; Psalm 18:30; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4-5; Heb. 12:9).

We believe in the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and God the Son, possessing both natures of complete humanity and full deity. We believe Jesus Christ, in his sinless humanity, is the only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. We believe in the penal-substitution of his atonement on the cross. Moreover, we believe he physically resurrected from the grave in the very body in which he was crucified and ascended into heaven where he is seated on the right side of God making intercession on behalf of His people before the Father (cf. Isa. 7:14; John 1:14, 18; Php. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:23; 1 John 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Acts 1:10-11).

We believe the Holy Spirit is currently present, sent by the Father and Son, to convict the world of sin and to testify in the heart and conscience of mankind to Christ’s redemptive work on the cross. He also holds the role of regeneration, sanctification, and empowerment in all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ acting as a helper, teacher, and guide. Moreover, we believe the Holy Spirit to be in very nature God (cf. John 14:26; John 16:7-15; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 8:14-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30).

### **III. SALVATION**

We believe that all mankind are sinners by nature and by choice (Gen. 3; Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:10-12). We believe the way that we can enjoy fellowship with God forever is threefold: (1) Repent of our sin (Acts 2:38; 20:21); (2) Believe in our heart that Christ alone paid for our sins by his death on the cross and provides salvation as a gift apart from human merit (cf. John 3:16-18; Rom. 5:6-8; 10:9-10; Eph 2:1-9); (3) Surrender the leadership of our life to Jesus Christ, following him daily in his Kingdom (Luke 9:23; John 5:24; Philip. 2:5-11).

### **IV. THE END TIMES**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of his physical Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous with God in heaven, and the eternal suffering of the wicked apart from God in hell (cf. John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:1-15; Matt. 25:31-46).

## **V. CHURCH COUNCILS**

In the first millennium, historians point to seven councils that are accepted by the various prongs of Christendom,<sup>14</sup> in addition to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). These councils are as follows: (1) First Council of Nicea, (325 AD); (2) First Council of Constantinople, (381 AD); (3) Council of Ephesus, (431 AD); (4) Council of Chalcedon, (451 AD); (5) Second Council of Constantinople, (553 AD); (6) Third Council of Constantinople, (680-681 AD); and (7) Second Council of Nicea,<sup>15</sup> (787 AD).

These legendary assemblies were bureaucratic exercises in theology where written documents were circulated; speeches were made and responded to; votes were taken; and final documents were published and distributed in response to the prevailing issue of the day. Among other tenets, these councils effectively repudiated the false teachings of Arianism,<sup>16</sup> Nestorianism,<sup>17</sup> Monophysitism,<sup>18</sup> and Monothelism.<sup>19</sup> Of the seven ecumenical councils held during the first few centuries of the Church, two of the more significant were the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon. At those meetings, heretical teachings about the person and nature of Christ were condemned and the biblical position carefully crafted.

## **The Vision of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

**O**ur vision is to bridge the divide that exists in southern New Hampshire between historic fundamentalism and seeker-sensitive evangelicalism. Both veins of orthodox Christianity, as well-intentioned as they are, become vulnerable to sectarianism, legalism, or liberalism if not balanced by the rule of Scripture. Our vision, therefore, is to avoid this pitfall by placing a premium on the intellectual study and application of sacred Scripture while remaining culturally accessible. It is at this crossroad where we seek to bridge the traditions of yesterday with the avant-garde mindset of contemporary evangelicalism.

We are a church that envisions, and therefore advocates, a high view of Scripture, fundamental (or orthodox) doctrine, a healthy respect for church history, and an earnest desire to have an impact on our community, and then subsequently, our culture. For that reason we believe the wedding of fundamentalism and contemporary ministry is the ideal marriage.

## **The Mission of BridgeWay Christian Church (BCC)**

**T**he Mission Statement of BCC reads as follows:

“The guiding principle of BridgeWay is to glorify God in all we do. The purpose of BridgeWay is to witness to the holiness of God and to the necessity of separation from personal apostasy and worldliness; to function in brotherly love for the edification, exhortation, growth, and comfort of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with New Testament principles; and to evangelize the unsaved (1 Pet. 1:15, 16; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 10:31; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 4:12-16).”

First, we want to bring glory to God in every area of our life. This includes not only on Sunday morning when we come together as a church, but in our every-day life, whether in our neighborhood, at work, or during social gatherings. As Christians, people ought to see a difference in our lives by the principles we live by.

Second, we witness to God’s holiness in personal separation from the things of this world. Not everything in this life is sinful, but we need to remain distinct and separate from the world from which we have been called out of. Our lives are to be lived differently from our unsaved co-workers, neighbors, and friends and family so that they will see our living testimony by the way we live.

Church is important and all believers need to belong to a body that fits the above criteria. We need relationships that can only be found in the body of believers, we need the support that only the church can offer, and we need to serve God in community as well as individually.

As believers, there are certain basic doctrines that we must believe, but beyond that there is latitude on how we can serve and worship; it is this latitude that is the only good reason for denominations. This is diversity and not disunity. The first allows us to be individuals in Christ, the latter divides and destroys. As our Vision Statement clearly states and our Mission Statement simply echoes, BCC exists to bridge the traditions of yesterday with the avant-garde mindset of contemporary evangelicalism.

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<sup>1</sup> www.merriam-webster.com

<sup>2</sup> www.merriam-webster.com

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from *Pastoral Ethics*, Dan Sherman; www.my-pastor.com; 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from *Women and Men In Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* by Robert Saucy & Judy TenElshof; Moody Publishers; 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government* by Paul E. Engle and Steven B. Cowan, Zondervan; 2004.

<sup>6</sup> First Presbyterian Church of Shelbyville, TN (www.firstprez.net/sacramentspage.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* by Thomas R. Schriener and Shawn D. Wright; B & H Publishing Group; 2007

<sup>8</sup> Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from *The Lord's Supper is a Celebration of Grace* by Gordon Keddie; Evangelical Press; 1999.

<sup>10</sup> See Prov. 15:5; 17:10, 25:12, 27:5; 29:15; 1 Cor. 4:14; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 1:20; 3:4-5; Heb. 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115, 141:5; Eccl. 7:5; Matt. 7:26-27, 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1-5; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Tit. 1:13-14; Jam. 1:22.

<sup>11</sup> See Prov. 13:20; Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 5:11, 15:33-34; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:11-12; Heb. 10:24-25.

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Cor. 5:6-7; 2 Cor. 13:10; Eph. 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Rev. 21:2, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> See Prov. 28:7; Matt. 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14; Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Pet. 2:2; 1 John 3:10.

<sup>14</sup> Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox Christians.

<sup>15</sup> In place of the Second Council of Nicaea, Protestant denominations instead prefer the Council of Constantinople, which condemned the veneration of icons.

<sup>16</sup> Arianism erroneously taught that God the Father and the Son were not co-eternal.

<sup>17</sup> Nestorianism erroneously taught that Jesus exists as two persons, the man Jesus and the divine Son of God (or Logos), rather than as a unified person.

<sup>18</sup> Monophysitism erroneously taught that the Divine essentially obliterated the human nature of Christ.

<sup>19</sup> Monothelism erroneously taught that Jesus Christ had two natures but only one will.