



BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION

*A community of people growing in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
for the glory of God, the good of the city, and the hope of the world.*

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BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION OF CITY CHURCH MELISSA

PREAMBLE

Recognizing the God-ordained responsibility of the Local Church

1. To stand for the fundamentals of the faith;
2. To teach the Word of God;
3. To evangelize the world;
4. To glorify Jesus Christ;
5. To administer the ordinances;
6. To project orderliness in all things;

We the members of City Church Melissa of Melissa, Texas, submit to the government for our church as outlined in the following Articles, which form our constitution.

In the event of an inconsistency or conflict between the Constitution and Bylaws, the provisions of the Constitution shall govern. In the event of a conflict between either the Bylaws or the Constitution and the laws of the State of Texas, the provisions of the laws of the State of Texas shall govern. However, if the Elder Board of City Church Melissa reasonably believe that any such laws are in conflict with the Scriptures as interpreted by City Church Melissa, they shall have the right, on behalf of City Church Melissa and at its expense, to challenge such laws in a manner provided by the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Texas.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this corporation is City Church Melissa. This corporation will be further referred to in these Bylaws as the "Church".

ARTICLE II: OFFICES

Section 2.1 Principal Office

The principal office for business transactions of the Church is Melissa, TX. This office is located in Collin County. The Church Elders shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

Section 2.2 Other Offices

The Elder Board has the power and authority to establish other offices, sites and locations at any place or places where the Church is qualified under applicable law to conduct its business.

ARTICLE III: NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Section 3.1 Nonprofit Status

The Church is a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the state of Texas and is organized under the Texas Business Organization Code, as amended (the "Code"). Federal tax exemption is granted under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

Section 3.2 Purpose

The Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by any organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

The Church is not organized and shall not be operated for the private gain of any person. The property of the corporation is irrevocably dedicated to its religious and charitable purposes. No part of the assets, receipts, or net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to any individual. The corporation may, however, pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and make other payments and distributions consistent with these Articles.

Section 3.3 Dissolution

Upon termination or dissolution of the Church, any assets lawfully available for distribution shall be distributed to one (1) or more qualifying organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or described in any corresponding provision of any successor statute) which organization or organizations have a charitable purpose which, at least generally, includes a purpose similar to the terminating or dissolving corporation.

The organization to receive the assets of the Church hereunder shall be selected by the discretion of a majority of the managing body of the Church and if its members cannot so agree, then the recipient organization shall be selected pursuant to a verified petition in equity filed in a court of proper jurisdiction against the Church by one (1) or more of its managing body which verified petition shall contain such statements as reasonably indicate the applicability of this section. The court upon a finding that this section is applicable shall select the qualifying organization or organizations to receive the assets to be distributed, giving preference if practicable to organizations located within the state of Texas.

ARTICLE IV: AFFILIATIONS

City Church Melissa is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in the fulfillment of its purposes, the Church may voluntarily affiliate with other churches, networks, denomination, or conventions by a passing vote of the Elder Board.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

Section 5.1 Public Worship

Meetings for public worship shall be held at such times and places as may be provided for under the direction of the Church Elder Board.

Section 5.2 Church Business Meetings

The Church Elder Board shall have the authority to call a Church business meeting or special meetings as needed.

ARTICLE VI: INDEMNIFICATION

Section 6.1 Indemnification

The Corporation shall indemnify its Pastors and Elders to the extent permitted by applicable laws of the State of Texas and may indemnify its employees, ecclesiastical officers, volunteers and agents to the same or a lesser extent.

Section 6.2 Insurance

The Church will carry liability insurance as required by the State of Texas.

ARTICLE VII: FISCAL YEAR

Section 7.1 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January of each year and end on the last day of December of each year.

Section 7.2 Financial Records

Periodic financial records shall be given to the Church and each Elder/Trustee meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: BYLAW AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws, as from time to time in effect, can only be amended by a three-quarters (3/4) supermajority vote of the Elder Board.

CONSTITUTION OF CITY CHURCH MELISSA

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE, CHURCH STRUCTURE, AND STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

Section 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Constitution is to provide guidelines for the ecclesiastical governance of City Church Melissa. Founded in 2014, City Church Melissa exists to create a community of people growing in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ for the glory of God, the good of the city, and the hope of the world.

City Church Melissa fulfills its purpose by proclaiming the Gospel, cultivating deep community, making disciples, serving sacrificially, and living missionally.

Section 1.2 Church Structure

City Church Melissa is structured as a non-denominational community of faith. The Church being autonomous and governed by its own Elder Board. While being autonomous, the Church has the authority and option of entering into a collective or family of churches if the Elders deem it necessary to help care, equip and support other church plants or planters within said collective or network.

Section 1.3 Statement of Faith and Basis for Theological Beliefs

Despite its non-denominational status, City Church Melissa and its Covenant Partners value the historical roots of the Christian faith and confess essential Christian doctrines as best summarized in the foundational Apostles' Creed:

*We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,
died, and was buried. He descended into the dead.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to
judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic (universal) church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.*

(As supplements, the Elders of City Church Melissa would also point to the following summaries of specific biblical doctrines: the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, and the Lausanne Covenant)

Specifically, every Covenant Partner at City Church Melissa must be able to affirm the following beliefs:

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13).

THE GODHEAD

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-eternal in being, co-eternal in nature, co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfections, and that God possesses perfect knowledge of all things, past, present, and future, including all human thoughts, acts, and decisions. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (John 1:1–2, 14; Luke 1:35). We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3–5). We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry as Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1–2). We believe Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5; Romans 14:9; 2 Timothy 4:1).

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8–11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18).

HUMANITY

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; man is totally depraved and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1–3, 12).

GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND MARRIAGE

We believe that God created human beings in his image in two embodied sexual kinds—male and female (Genesis 1:26–27). We believe that God designed marriage to consist of a union between man and a woman, which is complementary, involving one of each sexual gender, exclusive, and permanent (Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:4–6; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Hebrews 13:4). Christian singleness is not a state of insufficiency but rather, like marriage, is a gift bestowed by God (1 Cor 7:7; Matthew 19:11).

RACISM

We denounce racism and racial injustice in all of its forms as incompatible with the biblical gospel. This includes the sin of partiality that affects our hearts individually and the various ways that racism manifests itself socially and culturally. Racism is evil and is an affront to our Creator, who made each of us -- from every ethnic background, female and male, young and old, rich and poor, weak and strong -- in His image.

SALVATION

We believe salvation is by faith alone in Christ Jesus whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins, and that faith is a gift of God's free and sovereign grace which He gives according to His will. (Ephesians 2:8–10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37–40; 10:27–30; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:4–8; 1 Peter 1:5). We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh (Romans 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11–15).

THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowing of spiritual gifts. It is, however, the believer's responsibility to operate in their sovereignly given spiritual gift(s). The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion and is the placing of the believer into the Body of Christ. We also believe that particular spiritual gift(s) are neither essential, nor prove the presence of the Holy Spirit, nor are an indication of deep spiritual experience (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 13; Ephesians 4:7–8). We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accordance with His own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14, 15). We believe that it is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to minister according to the gift(s) and grace of God that is given to him (Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

THE CHURCH

We believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons and that all Christians are commanded by Scripture to take part in the regular teaching, fellowship, and accountability of a congregation of fellow disciples led by biblically qualified pastors organized as a Gospel Church (Hebrews 10:25, Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25–27; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; 2 Corinthians 11:2).

We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 18:22; 20:17; 1 Timothy 3:1–3; Titus 1:5–11). We believe in the autonomy of the local churches, free of any external authority and control (Acts 13:1–4; 15:19–31; 20:28; Romans 16:1, 4; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16; 1 Corinthians 5:4–7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1–4). We believe baptism is a sign of our covenant relationship with God and is a part of our act of spiritual worship and Biblical obedience. We believe the Lord’s Supper is a Scriptural means of testimony for the church meant to declare the life, death and resurrection of Jesus together. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 16:31; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

City Church Melissa shall operate in accordance with the Scriptures, its Constitution, and its Bylaws. In the event of an inconsistency or conflict between this Constitution and the Constitution or laws of the United States of America and/or the Constitution or laws of the State of Texas, the provisions of the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and/or the Constitution and the laws of the State of Texas, as the case may be, shall govern. However, if the Elder Board decides that such laws are in conflict with the Scriptures as interpreted by City Church Melissa, they shall have the right, on behalf of City Church Melissa and at its expense, to challenge such laws in the manner provided by the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Texas.

ARTICLE II: CHURCH ELDER BOARD

Section 2.1 Composition, Powers and Responsibilities

The Church Elder Board are the spiritual leaders of City Church Melissa and shall, including the Church Pastors, be responsible for the spiritual direction of the Church. We are an elder-led church that affirms the equality of male and female and the principle of male servant leadership for our elders. The Elder Board is comprised of both vocational (pastors) and lay elders. There shall never be more vocational elders than lay elders on the board. The Elder Board is charged with providing spiritual covering for the vocational pastors, prayerfully providing aid, instruction, guidance, protection and correction, counsel, wisdom and fellowship to the pastors. The Elder Board hear accusations against vocational pastors as brought to their attention by a member of the Church. The Elder Board may investigate the pastor(s) at their discretion. Some possible charges include: (a) adultery; (b) embezzlement; (c) compulsive lying; (d) sexual impurity; (e) conviction of a felony in violation of Scripture; and (f) not acting in the best interest of the Church. As necessary, the Elder Board may consult other advisory boards or counsel for disciplinary action. The Elder Board additionally has the following enumerated responsibilities: (a) providing pastoral care (b) approving the annual Church budget and all employee compensation (c) guarding doctrine; (d) administering church discipline; and (e) disciplining and developing leaders. The Elder Board retains the responsibility to interview and approve candidates for partnership but may delegate such responsibility at their discretion.

Section 2.2 Qualifications; Appointment; Removal

A Church Elder shall have the character qualifications delineated in Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7:

1. Blameless (a reputation above reproach)
2. One-woman Man (faithful husband of one wife)
3. Temperate (not given to extremes)
4. Sober-minded (not frivolous, but serious-minded)
5. Having orderly behavior
6. Given to hospitality
7. Apt to teach (founded well enough in the Scriptures to lead others)
8. Not addicted to wine
9. Not a violent man
10. Not fond of dishonest gain
11. Patient
12. Not a brawler (peaceable, not contentious)
13. Not covetous
14. Ruling his own house well
15. Not a novice (not spiritually immature)
16. Having a good reputation before the world
17. Not self-willed, stubborn, or arrogant
18. Not quick-tempered
19. Loving that which is good
20. Just
21. Holy (devout, pious)
22. Holding fast the faithful word (defenders of sound doctrine)

Church Elders shall be nominated by the vocational pastor(s) and approved by unanimous consent of the Elder Board, with an open period of time for comments from Covenant Partners of the Church of not less than 30 calendar days. Candidates for Eldership must have been active covenant partners in good standing of City Church Melissa for at least one year prior to nomination.

A. The removal of Pastor(s): The dismissal of any Pastor (vocational Elder) supported by this church shall not be considered until the Pastor in question has been approached relative to the reason(s) for the proposed dismissal by a delegation of at least two elders. Any reason(s) for dismissal shall be consistent with requirements for a Pastor (Article III, Section 2) and/or current human resources policy. The Pastor under consideration shall be notified in writing of the reason(s) for the recommended dismissal and at his discretion, may be represented by two members, introduce evidence, and present and cross-examine witnesses. If, after examination, the Board of Elders recommends dismissal by an affirmative vote of at least four-fifths ($\frac{4}{5}$) of the total number of the Elders, two (2) weeks' notification will be given to the congregation in order to solicit additional information that might overturn the vote for dismissal. The Board of Elders shall meet again after the two-week period and either overturn or uphold the previous vote. Notification of the vote will be given to the congregation the following Sunday.

B. The removal of Elder(s): Any Elder may be removed from office for conduct contrary to the Word of God at any duly called Elder meeting. If an elder is perceived to have conduct or beliefs incompatible with the requirements for an Elder, at least two witnesses, not man and wife, shall bring this to the attention of the Board, which will investigate the charges. If the charges are substantiated, the Board will dismiss the offending member by a $\frac{3}{4}$ supermajority of the entire remaining elder board. If it becomes evident to church members that the board is failing to act on legitimate charges, a petition signed by $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Covenant Partners of the church and presented to the Board will automatically remove the offending Elder.

Section 2.3 Decision-making

The Elder Board makes decisions in accordance with Acts 15:28, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us." The pastors are considered a part of the Elder Board. The pastors call meetings of the Elder Board as necessary with appropriate notice. Attendance of Elders at a meeting constitutes a waiver of notice of such meeting. In no event may the Elder Board meet less than once a year. As much as possible, decisions of the Elder Board should be made unanimously. However, decisions of the Elder Board made with a majority vote of all the Elders, not just those present at the meeting, are effective. With such a high standard for decision-making, there are no quorum requirements. The annual budget must have a three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) supermajority vote of the Elder Board to be approved. The Elder Board may use electronic communication to participate in meetings, with such participation constituting presence in person at such meetings.

Section 2.4 Term of Office

The Church Elder Board will stagger 5 year terms for each lay Elder to prevent the entire board from expiring simultaneously. After each 5 year term, a mandatory break for 1 calendar year is required for all lay Church Elder Board members. A lay Church Elder may be reappointed by the full Elder Board.

Section 2.5 No Compensation

The lay Church Elders shall serve in such capacity without compensation. Reasonable expenses incurred by the lay Church Elders in connection with their service may be reimbursed.

Section 2.6 No Liability as Church Elders

The Church Elders shall have no personal liability in connection with the decisions, actions, and/or omissions of the Church Elder Board, except in the event of gross negligence, willful or criminal misconduct or in direct violation of authorization. Except in the enumerated events above, City Church Melissa will indemnify the Church Elder Board for any costs arising out of any legal matter. The Church Elders shall not be required to give any bonds for the faithful performance of their duties.

ARTICLE III: OTHER ADVISORY BOARDS

Section 3.1 Description

The Church has the prerogative to assemble additional boards for the purpose of advising and assisting the Church Elder Board. These boards may be temporary or permanent, per Elder Board decision. Examples of these boards are, but not limited to: finance, real estate, ministry advancement, human resources, and other areas advisement is deemed appropriate. Advisory Boards are deemed as optional, not a requirement for the Church.

Section 3.2 Appointment

The Church Elder Board will appoint men and women to the advisory board(s). The Church Elder Board will determine the terms for each member.

Section 3.3 Powers and Responsibilities

There is no governance power within any advisory board. These boards are for advising and recommendation purposes only. Advisory Boards do not have authority to make decisions beyond what the Church Elder Board approves.

ARTICLE IV: COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

Section 4.1 Powers and Responsibilities

The Partners of City Church Melissa comprise the body of Christ in accordance with 1 Corinthians 12:14. Partnership indicates a formal commitment to and identification with City Church Melissa. Partners are charged with faithfully seeking Jesus and representing Him to their sphere of influence. Partners have access to certain church resources and are priorities for care and development. Only Partners have the right to serve in church leadership, or as a Church Elder. Additionally, Partners have the following enumerated responsibilities: (a) continue in spiritual development; (b) participation in City Church Melissa community life; (c) generosity and financial support; (d) development and utilization of spiritual gifts.

Section 4.2 Qualifications

Covenant Partnership at City Church Melissa is voluntary accountability to shared theology, ethics, practices, and authority. To be a Partner, City Church Melissa requires that a partnership candidate, observes the following standards: (a) have a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ including a confession of the essential doctrines outlined in City Church Melissa's Statement of Basic Beliefs; (b) have publicly identified with Him and His Church through baptism; (c) are willing to submit to the authority of the Church Pastors and Elders; (d) are willing to participate in the Church and the overall mission of City Church Melissa; and (e) are approved by the Elder Board, at their discretion.

Section 4.3 No Management or Inspection Rights

Partnership does not entitle a Partner to: (a) any rights in the management, control, decision making, or governing of the affairs of City Church Melissa, whether such affairs be of a spiritual or financial nature; or (b) the right to view, review or inspect any corporate document or asset or any copy thereof unless otherwise required by applicable law. The Elder Board may, at their discretion, permit inspection.

Section 4.4 No Liability as Partners

Partners shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities or obligations of City Church Melissa unless so required by applicable law.

Section 4.5 Church Discipline

A Partner covenants to submit to the authority of The Church Pastors and Elder Board. A Church Pastor or Elder may, at their discretion, take appropriate disciplinary action toward a Partner. Instances in which disciplinary action shall be warranted, include, but are not limited to, cases in which (a) a Partner engages in acts or omissions which cause harm within City Church Melissa; and (b) a Partner engages, without having repented and changed his or her behavior, in conduct which is not consistent with the Scriptures as interpreted by City Church Melissa.

Section 4.6 Removal

In order to remove a Partner, a delegation of at least two (2) Elders must provide the Partner with written warning and an opportunity to meet for reconciliation and prayer. If reconciliation does not happen, the Church Elder Board shall revoke the individual's Partnership status and exclude the individual from the fellowship of City Church Melissa. City Church Melissa will then inform all necessary parties as necessary, including the entire congregation, as the situation warrants. A Partner may remove him or herself from Partnership at City Church Melissa by writing a letter informing the Pastor(s) and/or Elder(s) of his or her decision. Such removal is effective upon the receipt of such notice.

ARTICLE V: SACRAMENTS

Section 5.1 Baptism

Baptism is performed by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to all those who profess Christ. The Church shall practice dedication of infants and children.

Section 5.2 Communion

Communion shall be administered to professing believers periodically.

ARTICLE VI: ORDINATION AND LICENSING

Section 6.1 Ordination

City Church Melissa will consider ordaining duly qualified pastoral, ministerial and executive staff positions as determined by the Elder Board in accordance with the guidelines of Scripture. All ordained staff members are expected to assist in baptism, communion, prayer and other ministerial duties. Furthermore, ordained males are expected to be available to officiate weddings and funerals.

Section 6.2 Revocation

City Church Melissa reserves the right to revoke ordination in cases such as moral failure or termination of employment. The decision to rescind or extend ordination shall be at the discretion of the Church Elder Board.

Section 6.3 Licensing

City Church Melissa will consider licensing select individuals on a case-by-case basis for various aspects of ministry and mission. Licenses can be issued for a specific term or indefinite periods at the discretion of the Church Elder Board.

ARTICLE VII: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Section 7.1 Amendments

This Constitution, as from time to time in effect, can only be amended by a vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the entire Elder Board.

APPENDIX: CHURCH STATEMENTS

The following statements written and affirmed by the Elder Board are intended to expand and teach our best understanding of the biblical text. While the Bible is usually quite clear, its application - particularly in a post-christian culture - often is not.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Though various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of marriage, it is God alone who has the ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-12).

Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord (Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4).

As a consequence, City Church Melissa regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or even lustful intent toward such, as sinful and ultimately unsatisfying.

Moreover, City Church Melissa also regards as sinful the intent or desire to surgically alter one's biological sex to a different sex. Since the body is a creation of God, City Church Melissa holds sexual identity to be biologically determined, and any gender norms are to be observed according to clear biblical standards. Disagreement with one's biological sex only leads to spiritual confusion and emotional chaos (Genesis 1:27, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Though sinful sexual expression is egregious (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7).

City Church Melissa's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality does not provide grounds for bigotry, bullying or hate, as we fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, regardless of his or her lifestyle. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated as sinful and are not in accordance with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of City Church Melissa.

The Elders of City Church Melissa reserve the right and authority to prohibit church assets or property to be used in any manner that would be deemed inconsistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. City Church Melissa's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Scriptures, upon which this Church was founded and anchored, and shall not be subject to change through the prevailing opinion of the general public; the influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

Statement derived from The Village Church in Flower Mound, Tx.

Statement on Racial and Gospel Unity

In the history of the church in America, Christians have often stayed silent in the face of injustice, allowing evil to rule, even when it caused great harm to both our fellow man and our witness as ambassadors of Christ. With those past failures in mind, the Elders of City Church Melissa feel it necessary to forcefully call out a sin that has haunted our nation from its inception and the more subtle expressions that weaken our witness to our city even now.

Racism is a grievous sin, resulting in systemic oppression. It is demonic, and we, as the body of Christ, are called to stand against it. While equal treatment and justice are American values that we proclaim, too often they are not experienced by all of our fellow citizens.

We also call out the broader sin of pride, of which racism is maybe the most overtly evil expression. Specifically, we condemn the kind of pride that expresses itself through partiality, as a kind of tribalism elevating those who are "like me," and denigrating and devaluing those who are not (James 2:1-13).

This tribalism is so insidious in part because it is comfortable and subtle, and so it goes undiagnosed. But like a cancer, it silently infects our whole body and changes the way we view and interact with others – others who, like us, bear the image of God.

The first pages of the Bible establish firmly that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–28). This is true for every person in every place with every hue of pigmentation in their skin, whatever their experience, background, or even spiritual disposition.

We recognize that as we call out this sin that damages not only the body of Christ in general but our local family of God in Melissa specifically, we understand that it is not enough merely to name this sin. Each of us needs to examine ourselves and repent. None of us are immune.

We also commit to pray and work for the good and welfare of our city (Jeremiah 29:7) and nation, for all people. To speak up for the voiceless (Proverbs 31:8–9). To do good works motivated by the gospel (Titus 2:11–13). To confront injustice (Isaiah 1:17). We plead, “Lord, may your kingdom come, and your will be done here [in Melissa] as it is in heaven.”

The call to love our neighbor has no contingencies (Mark 12:30–31). Race, religion, political affiliation, or any of our perceptions of a person’s worthiness for dignity and love have no bearing to cancel that call (Luke 10:29–37). We are called to serve one another, absorbing personal wounds, to bind up the wounds and restore those suffering injustice—since therein lies the presence and work of a Savior who suffered the ultimate injustice. And by his wounds, we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). Even as we’ve witnessed that violence begets violence in cities across the nation, we pray the Spirit of God will bring peace and move God’s people to be peacemakers rather than merely peacekeepers (Matthew 5:9).

We believe the Church is the greatest hope to show what unity can look like in the midst of ever-deepening divides (Ephesians 2:11–22). City Church can serve as an incredible center of faith, broadcasting true power through a broken Savior that brings about real redemption and unity. And yet, we recognize that, too often, we are caught up in politicized narratives, forgetting our allegiance to our one true king, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we repent for seeking the comfort of alignment with a worldly power that compromises our Christian witness and the prophetic voice of God’s people. We call City Church Melissa to band together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, to confront and battle injustice, and to cry out together for those whose voices are too weary to be raised. This is not a side battle; this is part of our calling to battle sin and death. It is part of taking up our cross and following Jesus—against which the gates of Hades cannot overcome.

But, we must be willing to first let the Spirit convict and then cleanse us from this sin if we are going to be part of the solution – the salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16) – that can bring hope and unity to this dark and dying world.

Clarification of Doctrinal Statement for Elders and Teachers at City Church Melissa

In order to avoid confusion on Gospel issues, as an under-shepherd of City Church Melissa called to teach and disciple, I agree to teach in accordance with the following clarifications of the CCM Statement of Beliefs:

1. The Sovereignty of God in Salvation:

Man is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1) and cannot do anything to contribute to his salvation. His mind, body, and will were corrupted at the Fall (Rom 1:18-32), with the result that natural man cannot and will not recognize the beauty of Christ or the grace of the Cross and believe (2 Cor 4:4). "But God..." In salvation, God uses even the fallen will of men to sovereignly and irresistibly draw many to Himself through the gift of faith. Thus Salvation is from first to last, an act of God. (Eph 2:4-9)

"God saves sinners: he saves them in eternity past through unconditional election (Matt 22:14; John 15:16; Rom 8:29-30;), he saves them at the cross through definite atonement (Mat 1:21; Acts 13:48), he saves each of them at a specific moment through effectual calling (Luke 10:21-22; Jn 6:37-40; Rom 8:29-30; Rom 9:15), and he will save them to the uttermost through grace-driven perseverance (Phil 1:6)." (Scott Hubbard)

For further reading, see Chosen by God, by R.C. Sproul, and Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, by J.I. Packer

2. The inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture:

God desires to be known, and He has revealed Himself sufficiently through His Son and in His Word. By inerrancy, we mean that in the original manuscripts, does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. While there are many hard and often countercultural statements, our standard for truth and life is God's Word, and so we will not willingly teach anything counter to it or appeal to any other source as our final authority. See Ps 12:6, 119:89, Matt 24:35.

3. The Trinity:

The one, true God eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. While each person of the Godhead fulfills a different role, they are not separate Gods (tri-theism), nor can they be described as one person manifested in different ways (modalism). God has described Himself this way throughout Scripture, and so to depart from the language of the Trinity (as described in the Nicene Creed) is to depart from Biblical Christianity. See Matt 28:19; John 1:1-2, 17:24; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2.

4. Believers' Baptism by Immersion:

In every example of baptism in the Bible, baptism always follows a profession of faith, and it is always by immersion. Thus, City Church Melissa will always describe baptism in the same terms. Baptism is an act of obedience separate from saving faith (1 Cor 1:17), revealing the believer's public identity with Christ (Rom 6:4).

By signing below, I affirm the above statements as well as the full Statement of Beliefs and Bylaws of City Church Melissa, and to the best of my ability will communicate them faithfully.

Printed Name

Signature





CITY CHURCH

MELISSA