



# COVENANT *life*

## CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### DISTINCTIVES

**FOREWORD:** With respect to stating the distinctives of Covenant Life Christian Church, the intended purpose is for clarifying the secondary doctrines of this church. Some of these doctrines are emphasized because of the church's regional locality and because of the cultural and moral ease of the surrounding society.

We believe in the infallibility of God's Word and the fallibility of man's finite mind interpreting His Word. We do not state these distinctives to produce sectarianism or to communicate allegiance to a "solo thought of exclusivity", but to communicate this is what you will be taught and hear at this church, in order to circumvent any "false advertising" and "misguided" expectations.

We humbly reserve the right to be wrong in the light of God's Word and the scrutiny of His judgment in eternity.

#### NONCESSATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that the true regenerate believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and where the Holy Spirit dwells, He is able to do whatever He wills. We believe there is no "change" with Jesus Christ, He is the same yesterday, today and forever, so what He intended for the Holy Spirit to do through us in "Yesterday" is the same as for "Today" (John 14:17; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews 13:8)

We believe that the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church to all generations for empowerment to be witnesses in this present evil age. That power is not limited to internal boldness to proclaim Christ and to live righteously, but also with external manifestations of supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit. We do not see that scripture teaches that the age of spiritual power was limited to the first century church or was annulled by a dispensation or canon of scripture. We do not hold that 1 Corinthians 13:10 was intended by the Apostle Paul to be interpreted as a time when the church would not function in the power of the Holy Spirit because of the canonization of scripture. We hold to the promise which the Apostle Peter declared in Acts 2:38-39 that the gift of the Holy Spirit *is "...to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."* (Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4; Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 1 Corinthians 14; 1 Peter 4:10)

We believe there has been abuse, misuse and faulty administration of spiritual gifts within the church because of vain glory and ego-centric motives. The purpose of spiritual gifts is for the edification of all. Therefore we choose to administrate spiritual gifts through the eldership and approved leaders in every church meeting, with the elders judging the activity of spiritual manifestations. (Romans 12:4-9; 1 Corinthians 14:5; 1 Corinthians 14:26-33)

### **CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP**

We choose to practice in our church services a “contemporary” style, structure and worship. This is not to say that other styles of worship and liturgy are outdated and inferior or our form of worship is better and superior. Our form of worship style and structure is purely preferential in appeal while endeavoring to maintain the biblical directives of all worship: The Glory of God.

God seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth and who will love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. We believe this can be done with most preferential forms of worship styles, therefore we choose a more contemporary style using instruments and vocalists singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We believe in participatory and expressive worship in the congregation that has freedom within boundaries and promotes a lifestyle of praise and worship in the hearts of God’s people outside of the structured church meetings. We encourage each person to worship God in “singing in the Spirit and in the understanding” yet in such a demeanor not to draw attention to any individual but only as a means of personal worship in the corporate setting. (2 Samuel 6:17; 1 Chronicles 6:31-32; Amos 9:11; Acts 15:16; Psalm 100:2; 1 Corinthians 14:15,40; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)

### **COMPLIMENTARY ROLE OF WOMEN**

We believe in distinctive redemptive roles, design and defined by God, for masculinity and femininity. In our culture, the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with its distortions, have tried to undermine the leadership of biblical husbands and the intelligent willing support of that leadership by biblical wives. So we endeavor to motivate and encourage the restoration of the biblical complementary differences between masculinity and femininity which God has designed within the church.

We observe the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to biblical teaching, but undermine the truth of scripture because of the increasing acceptance of cultural trends and that culture reinterpreting apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts.

Therefore based on our understanding of biblical teaching, we uphold and affirm the following with regard to the roles and distinctions of men and women:

- Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18)
- Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order. (Genesis 2:18, 21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:12-14)
- Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the fall, and was not a result of sin. (Genesis 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9)
- The “Fall of Mankind” introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women. (Genesis 3:1-7, 12, 16)
  - Man’s leadership tends to be replaced by domination, passivity and irresponsibility. Women’s companionship and submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
  - In the church, men move toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and women tend to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

- Both the Old and New Testament affirm the principle of male authority and headship in the family and in the covenant community of the church. (Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 14:34-37; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15)
- Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women; so then no earthly submission, whether domestic, religious or civil, ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into error and sin. (Daniel 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Peter 3:1-2)
- Both men and women with a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never set aside biblical criteria for particular ministries; rather biblical authority should remain the testing for our subjective discernment of God's will. (1 Timothy 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

### **FAMILY INTEGRATED**

We believe that God has designed His church to be a spiritual family where members know and interact with one another intimately, the shepherds understand the sheep effectively, and the various body parts function interactively (1 Timothy 3:15). The current trend to put significance on numbers and size more than quality and effectual spiritual growth is ineffective in the building of devoted disciples to Christ. Eternal life for the disciple is the objective of the Gospel. Without direct, participative accountability in discipleship, we tend to build gatherings of “seekers” rather than “disciples” of Christ.

We believe that the family unit is a holy institution, ordained and established by the Sovereign Triune God and that the biblical family is a scripturally ordered household of parents, children, and sometimes others (such as singles, widows, divorcees, or grandparents), forming the God-ordained building blocks of the church (2 Timothy 4:19). The biblical order and unity of the family are crucial to the stability and health of the Church of Jesus Christ. The family design, especially fathers, is the focus of a fierce and unrelenting attack by the world, the flesh, and the devil. This has escalated to the point that Christians must rise up in defense of the family in uncompromising biblical warfare.

Unfaithfulness to God’s Word in our pulpits has produced the decline of biblical Christianity and the dissolution of the family in our pews which leads to unbiblical practices in the churches and to the erosion of biblical manhood and leadership. This in turn leads to the perversion of the role of women, the destruction of our children, and the collapse of our society. False doctrines derived from Darwinism, Marxism, Feminism, Secular Humanism, Psychology, and countless other unbiblical sources have emerged from a society that has discarded divine revelation and have contaminated or replaced God’s standards in many professing churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. The results of this are the fragmentation, not the unity of the family. Our prayer is that our God will build up Spirit-filled and healthy *family integrated* churches from the ashes of our fragmented, individualistic meetings where children resent ‘worshipping’ with the family. (Leviticus 10:11; Deuteronomy 4:9-10; Deuteronomy 6:7; Deuteronomy 11:19; Ephesians 6:4)

### **THEOCRATIC MODEL OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

We believe leadership is an obedient response to God, identified and clarified by the council of elders. Theocratic church government is a balance of submission between a singular head (Senior Pastor) and plural leadership (elders). Unity results from confirmed and clarified direction within the elder body and is appropriately communicated to the congregation by the pastor and eldership. (Exodus 18:17-24; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

## **MORAL PURITY IN PRACTICE**

Over the past decades we have seen men who were leaders, presidents, politicians and religious leaders fall to various scandals. We have seen men and women fail in their marriages and fail in raising their children. We have seen men and women give up on the dream in their hearts and isolate themselves from family and society and turn to pornography, immorality, alcoholism and substance abuse. There is no question about it; the decision to live your life for God's glory will require some tough choices. Moral purity is a choice that needs to be made in this present evil age and specifically in the region our church exists. Given the cultural climate in our regional churches of "come as you are" which used to mean the condition of your soul before God, rather than the casual, sensual clothing for your body, the need of moral purity is evident.

Moral purity defined for us is first an inward desire to live for God in every area of life which manifests in outward choices, behaviors and attire. It is the absence of biblically defined sexual immorality, sensual desires, pride of appearance and the desire to be looked at or paid attention too. Also, it is the absence of personal participation in cultural entertainment that violates biblical parameters. It is not defined as women looking "ugly" and men being "unkempt". Moral purity is a heart that desires to be fully pleasing to God and not pleasing to the cultural preferences of the world. (Matthew 23:26; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Colossians 1:10)

Points to evaluate concerning specific and practical guidelines regarding moral purity:

- The personal involvement in any sexual immoral behavior contrary to the general directives of the Word of God. (1 Corinthians 6:13, 18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; )
- Viewing the nakedness of any individual through choices of entertainment. (Leviticus 18; Leviticus 20)
- Any writing or designs on clothing that emphasize the personal and private parts of the body; where one's eyes naturally look with what is worn. (1 Timothy 2:9-10)
- The choice of material/fabric of clothing is sheer, provocative or where skin is exposed that in the interest of modesty should not be; this also applies to wearing of tight or form-fitting clothing.
- Question any inner desire for society to look with appeal at any physical attribute of one's self, or where there is a haughty and arrogant pride within the heart about personal appearance. (2 Corinthians 5:16-17)