

BRAVE

MISSION:

To Challenge BRAVE Warriors for Courageous Kingdom Advancement

VISION:

To Assemble a Spirit-filled Army to Fight for the Fulfillment of the Great Commission in our Lifetime

VALUES:

Bold in Faith • Resolute in Identity • Authentic in Relationships • Virtuous in Character • Engaged in Mission

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT of BRAVE CHURCH

GOD

We believe in the only true God (John 17:3): the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). He created all things (Revelation 4:11) and upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He is a God of truth and without iniquity; He is just and right (Deuteronomy 32:4); and He shall judge the world (Psalm 9:8).

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 4:3-4).

JESUS CHRIST

We believe in the total deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe He is the manifestation of God in the flesh. We believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We believe Him to be true God and true man (John 1:1, 14, 18; John 14:8,9; 1 Timothy 3:16).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the total deity of the Holy Spirit, who is third person of the Trinity and submits to both the Father and the Son. The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit works to convict people of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit regenerates the sinner upon believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and baptizes the believer into one body of which Christ is the head. He indwells, guides, instructs, fills, comforts, and empowers the believer for godly living and service through individually bestowed spiritual gifts. We believe that the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts upon believers as He chooses to edify the Church and advance Christ's kingdom. Functioning under the authority of God's Word, we believe that the Holy Spirit uses these gifts in His Church for the purpose of growing our love for God and for one another (John 16:8; John 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; 1 Corinthians 14; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

SCRIPTURES

We believe the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in their original writings. We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and the New Testament are God's complete and sufficient revelation and therefore carry God's authority for the total well-being of mankind (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16).

MAN

We believe man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker but, by voluntarily transgressing, fell from his sinless and happy state. Consequently, all mankind is sinful. All people are sinners not only by inheritance, but by their own choice and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that without exception every man and every woman is totally depraved and needs a Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18; Romans 1:32; Romans 5:1-2).

SALVATION

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that each person who through repentance and faith receive Him as their personal Savior are justified on the basis of His shed blood on Calvary. Each person who receives Christ as personal Savior is born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby becomes eternally secure as a child of God. We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes each believing person into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

RESURRECTION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into Heaven, and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate (Acts 1:3,9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

HEAVEN, HELL AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in and expectantly await the glorious, visible, personal, premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessed hope of His return has vital bearing on the personal life, service, and mission of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The saved will be raised to eternal, conscious bliss in Heaven, and the lost will be raised to eternal torment in hell in conscious separation from God. (Matthew 25:34; John 14:2; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 2:7; Matthew 8:11; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 13:49-50; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 12:5; Revelation 21:8).

BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

We believe that Christian baptism signified by immersion in water is a public declaration of and identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The Lord's Supper is the commemoration by believers of Christ's death and our union with Him until He comes again (Acts 4:13; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29).

THE CHURCH

Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, all believers have thereupon become part of His body, the Church. There is one Church universal, composed of all those who acknowledge Jesus

Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures command believers to gather together in person to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all nations (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:1; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20). Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command there is the local expression of the Church under the watch-care of pastors, Supervising Elders, Stewarding Elders, Shepherding Elders, and other supportive leadership. BRAVE Church congregants are to work together in love and unity, intent on the one ultimate purpose of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

CHRISTIAN LIVING

The Bible teaches that all believers are saints, set apart unto God, and are thus responsible to live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-19; 2 Timothy 2:19; Titus 2) lest the Word of God be blasphemed (1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5). As Christians, we should obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things which are above, walk as He walked, and accept as our responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world (1 John 2:3; Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 5:23; Matthew 28:19-20). A victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have presented themselves wholly to Christ and who walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, which all believers are called to do (Romans 12:1, 2; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 6, 7).

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF CLARIFICATION:

CREATION, EVOLUTION, AND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

We believe God created the universe in six literal 24-hour days and that, before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (Genesis 1; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16). God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom, and supreme authority (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11). We deny the theory of evolution which claims that nonliving substances gave rise to the first living material which then reproduced and diversified to produce all living creatures. We believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives each human being the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). God rules over His creation and cares about and is involved in the lives of individual people (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25; Acts 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:13; Ephesians 4:6).

PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION AND MATURITY

True disciples of Jesus Christ mature in their faith and have an increased desire for holiness. That person will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and therefore will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28). We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders' lives into others (2 Timothy 2:2). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the

Church. We believe disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

WORSHIP

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37). All believing men, women, and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence. Worship glorifies God through adoration (Psalm 95:6), praise (Psalm 99:5), prayer (Daniel 6:10-11), thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46), and a complete yielding to Him (Romans 12:1). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage, and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Exodus 15:1-21; II Samuel 6:14-16; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12). Several tenets guide our worship. We seek to:

- i. Lift high the name of Jesus Christ (John 4:22-26; John 12:32; John 14:6);
- ii. Encourage God's people to lift their hearts and voices to Him, giving Him praise and thanks in music and lyric (Nehemiah 12:45-46; Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 95:1-2);
- iii. Prepare hearts to hear the Lord speak through the proclamation of Scripture (Psalm 95:69; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42);
- iv. Emphasize fresh and contemporary expressions while retaining traditional elements that recognize the richness of our heritage in the faith (Deuteronomy 32:7; Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 46:8-9; Matthew 13:32; Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9);
- v. Pursue excellence in worship, knowing that God is worthy of our best (Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Psalm 33:3; 1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:4).

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

We affirm the God-ordained and significant role that women should play in establishing and leading the local church. Every leadership opportunity is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. The Scriptures clearly state that men are to serve in the office of Senior Pastor, Supervising Elder, Stewarding Elder, or Shepherding Elder and that women are not to serve in church positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men (1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9). We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God. The Bible is clear that men and women do not have the same roles. Qualified women may serve in any leadership position that is not forbidden in the Scriptures.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Satan and his demonic servants viciously oppose the work God performs in and through His people (1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1-7; Ephesians 6:12). God, who by His nature is infinitely more powerful than Satan who is a created being, in due time will have complete and total victory over Satan (1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10). Although it is appropriate to pray in Jesus' name for protection against demonic activity, the Scriptures do not instruct the Christian to "bind Satan in Jesus' name." Rather, the Scriptures instruct the Christian to combat Satan by:

- i. Humbly drawing near to God, knowing that He will give grace, mercy, and strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:6-10);
- ii. Resisting Satan's temptations (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9);
- iii. Rightly applying the truth of the Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:24-27);
- iv. Forgiving offenses (2 Corinthians 2:10-11);
- v. Putting on the whole armor of God's truth, righteousness, and readiness to share the gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer (Ephesians 6:11-20); and
- vi. Demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord by enduring trials (Revelation 2:10; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 3:9-10).

COUNSELING PHILOSOPHY

The Lord changes lives and accomplishes His purposes directly through reading and applying the Scriptures, meditating on the truths of the Scriptures, and prayer. The Lord also uses those who minister His Word as they encourage, exhort, admonish, edify, implore, reprove, rebuke, console, and support others toward godliness. God needs no new or unique insight into the human condition in order to change lives, regardless of whether that insight is gained through psychology or some other tool of human origin.

Psychological theories that may help people live healthier and more effectively are embellishments of principles already revealed in the Scriptures. Although some forms of human wisdom are true, they are not the Word of God. They are infinitely subordinate to, and not to be compared with, the matchless value of the Scriptures (Psalm 119:160; Isaiah 40:8; John 17:17).

Problems that are approached by integrating the Scriptures with psychological theories tend to deceive individuals into diminishing the God of the Scriptures and into believing that He has not provided and cannot provide sufficient truth, insight, and wisdom to change their lives (Colossians 2:8-10).

There are occasions when a licensed physician may make a diagnosis that manifests itself in physical, attitudinal, behavioral, or emotional struggles. In those occasions, the use of medications may be appropriate. However, when psychology and other social sciences step beyond observing human behavior and seek to explain the causes of that behavior, they enter spiritual territory. Only the omniscient God can explain such causes and offer solutions that lead men, women, and children to godliness and a fruitful, joyful life.

God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). He changes us as we discipline ourselves through obedience to the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 1:5-11). Each Christian's passion should be to become more like Christ (Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2) and to fulfill the Great Commandment to love the Lord with the entire heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37-38). The Christian who learns and applies the Word becomes mature and, in turn, can help others mature (2 Timothy 2:2).

The Lord's Church is a community of faith – a living body with Jesus Christ at the head (Colossians 1:17-18) – that influences, supports, and helps bring men, women, and children into

healthy relationships with the Lord and with others of the church. A healthy church body applies biblical principles to relationships at all levels, *i.e.*, the overall church context, ministries within the church, families within the church, and individuals within the church. God-honoring application of biblical principles throughout the church lead men, women, and children to healthier relationships at all levels (Ephesians 4:14-16; Hebrews 12:12-13). This application also helps ensure the integrity of the church's corporate and individual witness to a watching world (1 Peter 2:12).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that the Scriptures do not teach that certain gifts have ceased with the close of the New Testament nor the death of the last Apostle and that all believers are to earnestly desire spiritual gifts. While we believe that all gifts are in operation today, we do not believe that any gift is a sign of being saved or a sign of spiritual maturity. We believe that there are different gifts, different ministries for those gifts, and different levels of effectiveness of the gifts. All gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernatural and given for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ and advancing His kingdom. We believe that spiritual gifts are designed to honor the Lord Jesus Christ and to unite His Church, unify the Body of Christ and therefore do not honor the gifting of certain people; instead, we seek to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ with any and all gifts that the Holy Spirit has distributed. Maturing in spiritual gifts will result in a greater love for God and for one another in the Body of Christ. We believe that humility is the foundation for all spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12; 1 Corinthians 14; Matthew 28:18-20).

SALVATION AND SECURITY

It is God's divine decision to save a person (John 6:37; John 6:44; John 6:65; Romans 8:29-30; Romans 9:11-18; Acts 13:48; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:4-6; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:3) and it is God's kindness, forbearance, and patience that lead that person to repentance (Romans 2:4). The Bible also teaches that each person is responsible to embrace or reject Jesus as Savior and Lord and that God welcomes all who come to Him by faith apart from works (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 15:7; Luke 20:9-18; John 6:37; John 7:37; Romans 10:9-13; Acts 16:30-34; Acts 17:30). Both of these two truths – God's sovereignty in salvation and man's decision to embrace Christ – are taught in the Scriptures. Their co-existence is a mystery and is completely understood only in the mind of our omniscient God.

All glory for the salvation of every believer belongs to God alone (Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 1:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9; Jude 1:24-25).

Those who are born of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ persevere in the faith (Matthew 13:13; John 15:4-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:10-13; 1 John 4:13; 2 John 9). God is faithful to His people and empowers them to persevere in the faith (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:19-20).

We believe that everyone who is born of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ is assured of salvation from the moment of conversion (Ephesians 1:13-14). This assurance relies on God's decisive and faithful grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works, and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation but indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18).

Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14), and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16:30-34) and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, and protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

Scripture clearly teaches that God is the sole authority in matters of marriage and sexuality for all people, and that marriage involves the sacred joining together of one man and one woman in a faithful, permanent union (Genesis 2:18-24; Matthew 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Hebrews 13:4). God states in the Bible that he hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and Scripture states that He intends the marriage union to last until one of the spouses dies (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:10-13). Sex is a gift from God to be enjoyed solely within the God-ordained marriage relationship, and God has clearly and expressly commanded abstinence from any form of sexual or intimate activity outside of this context, prohibiting as “sexual immorality” activities related to, for example, lustful thoughts, adultery, fornication, pornography, homosexuality, bisexuality, or polygamy (Leviticus 18; Matthew 5:27; Matthew 15:9; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 5; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; Hebrews 13:4; Jude 1:7).

Disobedience in these matters is sin, although it is no more or less offensive to God than any other sin (Romans 6:23a; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5-19) and Scripture is clear that God provides redemption, healing, freedom from the power of sin, and restoration to all who would turn from sin and embrace Jesus Christ by faith (Acts 16:31; Romans 1:16; Romans 16:23b; 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7). BRAVE Church will love, disciple, exhort, and patiently assist men and women repenting of sin and fighting sexual temptations of all kinds (1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:14-16), and its firm conviction on Scripture's clear teaching on marriage and sexuality will not serve as grounds for bigotry, harassment, or fearful or hateful speech or action, which are forbidden by God as ineffective at producing change (Leviticus 19:17-18; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Galatians 3:1-3; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 4:5-6; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 1:19-21, 26; 1 Peter 2:1).

FINAL AUTHORITY

This Doctrinal Statement does not present the extent of our beliefs exhaustively. The Bible itself, as BRAVE Church's final and sufficient authority for all of life, is the sole and final source of all that BRAVE Church believes and will be interpreted and applied by the Board of Stewarding Elders, the Boards of Supervising Elders and Shepherding Elders to matters not expressly covered herein.