



## Our Faith Statement

We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. We are a group of church leaders inviting others to join the theological and disciple making journey described below. We want to trust and follow Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are committed to *restoring* the kingdom vision of Jesus and the apostles, *especially the message of Jesus' gospel*, the *method* of disciple making he showed us, and the *model* of what a community of his disciples, at their best, can become.

We live in a time when cultural pressures are forcing us to face numerous difficulties and complexities in following God. Many are losing their resolve. We trust that God is gracious and forgives the errors of those with genuine faith in his Son, but our desire is to be faithful in all things.

Our focus is disciple making, which is both reaching lost people (evangelism) and bringing people to maturity (sanctification). We seek to be a movement of disciple-making leaders who make disciples and other disciple-makers. We want to renew existing churches and help plant multiplying churches.

**1. God's Reliable Word**—We believe God gave us the 66 books of the Bible to be received as the inspired, authoritative, and infallible Word of God for salvation and life. The documents of scripture come to us as diverse literary and historical writings. Despite their complexities, they can be understood, trusted, and followed. We want to do the hard work of

wrestling to understand scripture in order to obey God. We want to avoid the errors of interpreting scripture through the sentimental lens of our feelings and opinions or through a complex re-interpretation of plain meanings so that the Bible says what our culture says. Ours is a time for both clear thinking and courage. Because the Holy Spirit inspired all 66 books, we honor Jesus' Lordship by submitting our lives to all that God has for us in them.

(Psalm 1; 119; Deut. 4:1-6; Deut. 6: 1-9; 2 Chron. 34; Nehemiah 8; Matt. 5:1-7:28; 15:6- 9; Jn. 12:44-50; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42; Acts 17:10-11; 2 Tim. 3:16 - 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:20- 21).

**2. The Gospel** – We believe God created all things and made human beings in his image, so that we could enjoy a relationship with him. But we lost our way, through the Satan's influence. We are now spiritually dead, separated from God. Without his help, we gravitate toward sin and self-rule. The gospel is God's good news of reconciliation. It was promised to Abraham and David and revealed in Jesus' life, ministry, teaching, and sacrificial death on the cross. The gospel is the saving action of the triune God – the Father sent the Son into the world to take on human flesh and redeem us and through the Spirit, we are transformed and sanctified. Jesus came as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. He ushered in the kingdom of God, died

He is seated at the right hand of God as Lord and he is coming back for his disciples. God will raise everyone for the final judgement. Those who trusted and followed Jesus by faith will not experience punishment for their sins and separation from God in hell. Instead, we will join together with God in the renewal of all things in the consummated kingdom. We will live together in the new heaven and new earth where we will glorify God and enjoy him forever.

(Gen. 1-3; Rom. 3:10-12, 7:8-26; Gen. 12:1-3 & Gal. 3:6-9; Is. 11:1-4; 2 Sam. 7:1-16; Mic. 5:2-4; Dan. 2:44-45; Lk. 1:33; Jn. 1:1-3; Matt. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Acts 1:11; 2:36; 3:19- 21; Acts 1:11; Col. 3:1; Matt. 25: 31-32; Rev. 21:1ff; Rom. 3:21-26.)

**3. Essential, Important and Personal Elements**—We believe the Scriptures reveal three distinct elements of the faith: *essential* elements which are

necessary for salvation; *important* elements which are to be pursued so that we faithfully follow Christ; and *personal* elements or opinion. The gospel is *essential*. Every person who is indwelt and sealed by God's Holy Spirit because of their faith in the Gospel is a brother or a sister. *Important* but secondary elements of the faith are vital. Our faithfulness to God requires us to seek and pursue them, even as we acknowledge that our salvation may not be dependent on getting them right. And thirdly, there are personal matters of opinion, disputable areas where God gives us personal freedom. But we are never at liberty to express our freedom in a way that causes others to stumble in sin. In all things, we want to show understanding, kindness, and love.

(1 Cor. 15:1-8; Rom. 1:15-17; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 2:8; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:4-6; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:4; Matt. 15:6-9; Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 11:1-2; 1 John 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:14-16; Rom. 14:1-23).

**4. Conversion**— To believe in Jesus means we trust and follow Him as both Savior and Lord. When we commit to trust and follow Jesus, we express this faith by repenting from sin, confessing His name, and receiving baptism by immersion in water. Baptism, as an expression of faith, is for the remission of sins. We uphold baptism as the normative means of entry into the life of discipleship. It marks our commitment to regularly die to ourselves and rise to live for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe God sovereignly saves as he sees fit, but we are bound by scripture to uphold this teaching about surrendering to Jesus in faith through repentance, confession, and baptism.

(1 Cor. 8:6; John 3:1-9; 3:16-18; 3:19-21; Luke 13:3-5; 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:36-38; 16:31-33; 17:30; 20:21; 22:16; 26:20; 16:31-33; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-4; 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rom. 2:25-29; 2 Chron. 30:17-19; Matt. 28:19-20; Gal. 2:20; Acts 18:24-26).

**5. Saving Faith**—We believe that people are saved by grace through faith. The gospel of Jesus' kingdom calls people to both salvation and discipleship—no exceptions, no excuses. Faith is more than mere intellectual agreement or emotional warmth toward God. It is living and active; faith is surrendering our self-rule to the rule of God through Jesus

in the power of the Spirit. We surrender by trusting and following Jesus as both Savior and Lord in all things; faith includes allegiance, loyalty, and faithfulness to him.

*(Eph. 2:8-9; Mk. 8:34-38; Lk. 14:25-35; Rom. 1:3,5; 16:25-26; Gal. 2:20; James 2:14-26; Matt. 7:21-23; Gal. 4:19; Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 3:3,17-18; Col. 1:28).*

- 5. God's Holy Spirit**—We believe God's desire is for everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Many hear the Gospel but do not believe it because they are blinded by Satan and resist the pull of the Holy Spirit. We encourage everyone to listen to the Word and let the Holy Spirit convict them of their sin and draw them into a relationship with God through Jesus. We believe that when we are born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are to live as people who are filled, empowered, and led by the Holy Spirit. This is how we walk with God and discern his voice. A prayerful life, rich in the Holy Spirit, is fundamental to true discipleship and living in step with the kingdom reign of Jesus. We seek to be a prayerful, Spirit-led fellowship.

(1 Tim. 2:4; John 16:7-11; Acts 7:51; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27; Jn. 3:5; Eph. 1:13-14; 5: 18; Gal. 5:16-25; Rom. 8:5-11; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:6; 9:40; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23; 20:36; 2 Cor. 3: 3).

- 6. Core Mission**—We believe the core mission of the local church is making disciples of Jesus Christ—it is God's plan "A" to redeem the world and manifest the reign of his kingdom. We want to be disciples who make disciples because of our love for God and others. We personally seek to become more and more like Jesus through his Spirit so that Jesus would live through us. To help us focus on Jesus, his sacrifice on the cross, our unity in him, and his coming return, we typically share communion in our weekly gatherings. We desire the fruits of Biblical disciple making which are disciples who live and love like Jesus and "go" into every corner of society and to the ends of the earth. Disciple making is the engine that drives our missional service to those outside the church. We seek to be known where we live for the good we do in our communities. We love and serve all people, as Jesus did, no strings attached. At the same time,

as we do good for others, we also seek to form relational bridges that we prayerfully hope will open doors, so we can teach people the gospel of the kingdom and the way of salvation.

(Matt. 28:19-20; Gal. 4:19; Acts 2:41; Phil. 1:20-21; Col. 1:27-29; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Thess. 2:19-20; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:1-13; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 11:17-24; Acts 20:7).

- 7. God's Kingdom, Love, and Holiness**—We believe in the present kingdom reign of God, the power of the Holy Spirit to transform people, and the priority of the local church. God's holiness should lead our churches to reject lifestyles characterized by pride, sexual immorality, homosexuality, easy divorce, idolatry, greed, materialism, gossip, slander, racism, violence and the like. God's love should lead our churches to emphasize love as the distinguishing sign of a true disciple. Love for one another should make the church like an extended family – a fellowship of married people, singles, elderly, and children – all brothers and sisters to one another. The love of the extended church family to one another is vitally important. Love should be expressed in both service to the church and to the surrounding community. It leads to the breaking down of walls (racial, social, political), evangelism, acts of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and the like. By demonstrating the ways of Jesus, the church reveals God's kingdom reign to the watching world.

(1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-9; Matt. 19: 3-12; Rom 1: 26-32; 14:17- 18; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Matt. 25:31-46; John 13:34-35; Col. 3:12-13; 1 John 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:1-13; 2 Cor. 5:16-21).

- 9. A Counter-Cultural People** —We believe Jesus' Lordship through scripture will lead us to be a distinct light in the world. We follow the first and second great commandments where love and loyalty to God comes first and love for others comes second. So, we prioritize the gospel and one's relationship with God, with a strong commitment to love people in their secondary points of need too. The gospel is God's light for us. It teaches us grace, mercy, and love – along with holiness, justice and the reality of hell - which led to Jesus' sacrifice of atonement for us. God's light is grace and truth, mercy and righteousness, love and holiness. God's light among us should be reflected in distinctive ways like the following:

A. We believe that human life begins at conception and ends upon natural death, that all human life is priceless in the eyes of God and that all humans should be treated as image bearers of God. For this reason, we stand for the sanctity of life both at its beginning and its end. We oppose elective abortions and euthanasia as immoral and sinful. We understand that there are very rare circumstances that may lead to difficult choices when a mother or child's life is at stake and we prayerfully surrender and defer to God's wisdom, grace and mercy in those circumstances.

B. We believe God created marriage as the context for the expression and enjoyment of sexual relations. Jesus defines marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman. We believe that all sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage, including same-sex unions and same-sex marriage are immoral and must not be condoned by disciples of Jesus.

C. We believe that Jesus invites all races and ethnicities into the Kingdom of God. Because humanity has exhibited grave racial injustices throughout history, we believe that everyone, especially disciples, must be proactive in securing justice for people of all races and that racial reconciliation must be a priority for the church.

D. We believe both men and women were created by God to equally reflect, in gendered ways, the nature and character of God in the world. In marriage, husbands and wives are to submit to one another, yet there are gender specific expressions: husbands model themselves in relationship with their wives after Jesus's sacrificial love for the church and wives model themselves in relationship with their husbands after the church's willingness to follow Jesus. In the church, men and women serve as partners in the use of their gifts in ministry, while seeking to uphold New Testament norms which teach that the lead teacher/preacher role in the gathered church and the elder/overseer role are for qualified men. The vision of the Bible is an equal partnership of men and women in creation, in marriage, in salvation, in the gifts of the Spirit and in the ministries of the church but exercised in ways that honor gender as described in the Bible.

E. We believe that we must resist the forces of culture that focus on materialism and greed. The bible teaches that the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil and that greed is idolatry. Disciples of Jesus should joyfully give liberally and work sacrificially for the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed.

(Rom. 12:3-8; Matt. 22:36-40; 1 Cor. 12: 4-7; Eph. 2:10; 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Matt. 20:24-27; Phil 1:1; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 2:11-15; 3: 1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Cor. 11:2-9; 14:33-36; Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Cor. 7:32-35).

**10. Jesus is Coming Back**—We believe that Jesus is coming back to earth in order to bring this age to an end. Jesus will reward the saved and punish the wicked, and finally destroy God's last enemy, death. He will put all things under the Father, so that God may be all in all forever. That is why we have urgency for the great commission to make disciples of all nations. We like to look at the great commission is an inherent part of God's original command to "be fruitful and multiply." We want to be disciples of Jesus who love people and help them to be disciples of Jesus. We are a movement of disciples who make disciples who help renew existing churches and start new churches that make more disciples. We want to reach as many as possible ... until Jesus returns, and God restores all creation to himself in the new heaven and new earth.

(Matt. 25:31-32; Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:11-15; 2 Thess. 1: 6-10; Mk. 9: 43-49; Luke 12:4-7; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Luke 24: 46-48; Matt. 28:19-20; Gen.12:1-3; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Lk. 6:40; Luke 19:10; Rev. 21:1ff).

<sup>1</sup> For more background on some of these points, see Richard Lovelace, *The Dynamics of the Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Paternoster, 1979).

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