

STATEMENT OF CORE VALUES

Our Mission is to evangelize and disciple Orlando and then 50 world class cities to the glory of God

Introduction: Why is a statement of values so important? An understanding of our core values is essential for the unity of the church, for the mission of the church and so that everyone knows up front what the church will emphasize and expect of its member, workers and leaders.

In one sense, the church is like an orchestra in that it is made up of many people with many different personalities, spiritual gifts, natural talents and viewpoints on life. Yet an orchestra can maintain unity to present an evening of beautiful music. This powerfully moving, majestic and excellent music is only possible if each musician is committed to the unity of the orchestra. They are unified on the piece of music they are going to play, the location in which they are going to play, the tempo, the style, the conductor who will direct the music, and so forth.

One musician may have the personal opinion that a piece of music should be played faster or slower or include different instruments or whatever, but after a loving discussion, if the conductor says the piece will be played as he directed, that musician must put their personal opinion aside for the sake of the whole and follow the conductor.

Unity (Rom. 14:1; Eph. 4:3)

We expect those associated with our church to support and protect the unity of the church. This does not mean "uniformity" in that every person believes every detail of every doctrine exactly the same as everyone else, dresses the same or thinks the same. Rather it means a commitment to the fundamental doctrines of historic Christianity, to the church staying together, and to working together for a common goal. For example, unity in a marriage does not mean that a couple must like the same food, music, colors, and hobbies, or that they even have the same viewpoint on important things like politics, education and theology. But it does mean that the couple is committed to staying together and working through their differences and not forcing their opinions to the point of dividing the marriage. *Unity is more important than personal opinions and human interpretations of the Bible.* The unity we expect includes a willingness to work together with other believers of various opinions, but who hold to common values as noted here.

Conflict Resolution (Matt. 18:15-20)

We expect those at Cornerstone Church to follow our Lord's commands in Matt. 18:15-35, and related Scripture, as touching on conflict. Satan's strategy always includes divide and conquer. He has tried it at Cornerstone in the past and will continue trying this tactic. Gossip, slander, sowing of discord is sin which the Lord God calls an abomination. Telling others what you are upset about and seeking to win them to your opinion is sin. Fighting, complaining, breaking relationships or leaving the church are not

God's way of resolving conflict. A person who leaves a church with unresolved conflict is in sin (1 Tim 5:19, 23-26).

Deal With Sowers of Discord Promptly (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10)

We expect those at Cornerstone Church to help put a stop to any gossip and division. "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self condemned" (Titus 3:10-11). Tell a person who comes to you with a bad report, "Have you talked personally to the person whom you are talking to me about? If not, then you must not talk to anyone else. If so, are you asking me to work through Matt. 18 with you and that person? If not, then you are gossiping and sowing discord and must stop now." There are those who are "antagonists" and refuse to make peace. They are tools of the enemy and must be confronted and, if need be, removed. A little leaven will leaven the whole lump. Cancer always spreads.

Realistic Positive Focus (Phil. 2:14; 4:8; 13)

Be realistic – no church is going to do everything the way you prefer. No murmuring and complaining. Maintaining a positive outlook and focus in our attitude about the church. We must intentionally focus on the numerous positive things we like about the church rather than repeatedly fixating on the few negative things. Every church will have 10% or 20% of things you don't like. To focus on those things will drown out the 80% or 90% you do like.

Fruit of the Spirit Attitude (Gal. 5:22-26)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to demonstrate the fruit of the Holy Spirit to all – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In conversations with each other seek how to yield. We must not win an argument and lose a friend. Give each other the benefit of the doubt. "Believe all things".

Submission to the Bible's Authority (2 Tim. 2:24-26; 3:16-17; 4:3)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to follow the Bible and avoid the errors of either Antinomianism or Phariseism. Phariseism is the practice of inventing man-made rules and giving them the weight of Scripture (Mk. 7:7). This is a very subtle danger which will foster a critical, judgmental spirit which will kill a church. As we seek to interpret the Bible and apply it to various life situations we will move into the area of opinion. Things that really matter in life are very clear in the Bible. For example, the Bible says, "Dress modestly" (1 Tim. 2:9). It does not say, "Women must not wear shorts."

Antinomianism is the belief that a believer is free to sin. Antinomianism is the false teaching that the believer is not under the authority of God's law. Paul explains that we are not under the "curse" of the law. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. His death paid the penalty required by the law of God and so believers are not under the condemnation of the law.

Submission to Christ's Lordship (Luke 6:46)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to obey the teachings of Jesus. Jesus is Lord and we must be taught to obey all things whatsoever He commanded us. All things that really matter are clearly laid out in God's Word. This is the doctrine of the "perspicuity" of Scripture. The main things are the plain things.

Submission to Delegated Authority (Heb. 13:7, 17)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to joyfully submit to those appointed to rule over them in the church (and all of life). God's kingdom is not anarchy, but is an orderly kingdom. God rules through His delegates. God appoints pastors and assistant pastors, discipleship leaders, ministry leaders and so forth through whom to reveal His will and guide His church. The authority of man over man is limited by the Word of God and the conscience. No delegated leader can ask a believer to disobey the clear command of God (Acts 4:19). No leader can command a believer to participate in something which would go against the brother's conscience. If the brother honestly, before God, thinks that action is wrong then to take part would be a sin for him (1 Cor. 8:7-13). Opinion issues should be talked through gently and respectfully in an attempt to seek possible compromise. However, the leader will eventually have to make a decision which is contrary to someone's opinion. This is where this core value comes in to play.

Pure and Holy Living (Rom. 1:29-31; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to live a pure life. By a "pure life" we understand this to mean a life that is clean from sin as clearly defined in the Bible. Sin is defined in Bible lists and with various terms such as breaking the clear commandments of God, trespassing, ungodliness, iniquity, failing to do good when we know the good to do, or acting without faith.

Gentleness, Forgiveness and Grace (Matt. 18:21-25; Gal. 6:1)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to maintain a gentle, forgiving spirit of grace toward those who fall into sin. We must seek to restore them to fellowship as a surgeon setting a bone. We do not expect sinless perfection and we must forgive those who sin in the same way as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us. Harsh, judgmental Phariseeism is not the spirit of Christ.

Commitment to Pastoral Leadership (Heb. 13:17)

We expect those in our church to submit to their pastor and the authority structure. While we acknowledge that there are many forms of church government that God has used to advance His kingdom, the form that fits our understanding of Scripture is team leadership with the Pastor as primary leader. Moses, Joshua, Jesus and Paul are examples of primary leaders who had their teams.

Belief in the Basic Essential Doctrines of Historic Christianity (2 Pet. 2:1)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to hold firmly to the essential doctrines of historic Christianity. We understand these to include: the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the

Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Christ, the virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, bodily resurrection, and literal physical return of Christ, salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, unity and purity. "In house" debates are not reason to divide.

Small Group Participation

We expect all those in association with Cornerstone Church to be an active part of a small, relational Bible study group at Cornerstone Church. We believe change takes place in a person's life most effectively in a small group setting as modeled by Jesus and His twelve. Team leaders and team members must be in small group. Church members should be in group since they committed to do so in their church covenant.

Discipleship Relationship

We expect current or potential team leaders and team members to be in discipleship. It is our goal to disciple every person who is associated with Cornerstone Church. The Pastor normally discipled all the male team leaders. It is also expected that the ones who are discipled will in turn disciple others who will disciple others also (2 Tim. 2:2). We also expect team leaders and team members to disciple one person a year. It is also our goal to disciple every person at Cornerstone Church.

Evangelism (Matt. 28:19; Luke 10:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:16-17)

We expect all team leaders and team members: **1.** to understand that evangelism is the focus of our church; **2.** to participate in evangelism training; **3.** to actively seek to share the gospel with lost people. We also expect that each team member and leader will seek to reproduce one soul per year. Winning lost people is the reason our church is on earth. We have many opportunities and will use many methods to share the gospel.

Follow Up (1 Cor. 3:5-12; Ezek. 34:1-6)

Paul planted, Apollos watered (followed up) and God gave the increase. Follow up is the "watering the seed" activity performed toward one who is "interested" in Christ, but who is not yet involved in discipleship. Discipleship, on the other hand, is the activity of teaching a convert how to obey God. Many people will take a "step toward God" when we first meet them and share the gospel with them, but will rarely follow through on that first step on their own initiative. These people may or may not be saved. They are not "ripe fruit" but are "fertile soil." Ripe fruit can be plucked, but fertile soil requires watering and weeding. We expect all those involved in evangelism to maintain a watering relationship with those they find who are fertile.

Reproduction

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to reproduce themselves. Each true disciple should seek to make more true disciples. This involves: sowing the seed (sharing the gospel), watering the seed (follow up), harvesting the seed (winning the soul), and then conserving the fruit (discipleship). Some will produce 100, some 60, and some 30 fold.

Priority of Your Local Church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-12)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to prioritize this, their home church, over any other church, religious organization, volunteer organization, club or other non-employment group. God saves us and puts us into the local church (the body of Christ) as a body part. The local church is our primary area for serving God. Church members should find a ministry in this church and faithfully serve God in that capacity. Our time, talents, tithe and testimony are to go into our local church ahead of any other volunteer group.

Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; Mark 2:27; Jas. 1:25; 2:8-12)

Furthermore, we believe that God has established the Sabbath as one of His Ten Commandments and that the Ten Commandments are to be obeyed (cf. Jas. 1:25; 2:8-12; 4:7-10). The Sabbath was instituted at creation as a pattern for all mankind to follow. God changed the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10), due to the resurrection of Christ on Sunday morning. This has been the understanding and practice of the church for 2,000 years.

Tithing (Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Heb. 7:1-9)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to tithe the first ten percent of all their increase to this church. Ten cents on every dollar, one dollar of every ten, and ten dollars of every hundred belong to God. It is His property and not to pay our tithe is to steal from God (Mal. 3:8). We believe that God's plan for the support of His ministers and the advancement of the gospel is the regular sacrificial giving of His people into their local church. The tithe was practiced before the law, made law under the law, endorsed and commanded by Christ, in whose steps we are to walk, practiced after the age of the Law and has been the consistent practice of the church throughout the world for all church history.

Culturally Relevant Forms (1 Cor. 9)

We expect those associated with Cornerstone Church to understand that we will choose culturally relevant forms rather than traditional forms. Our worship music will be with the form of music which most appeals to those in our culture and target group. We make a distinction between form and function. For example, the function may be evangelism while the form in which we evangelize may be through neighborhood visits, big events, and so forth. The Bible mandates the function (and some forms), but give freedom on most forms. We need unity on the functions and have freedom on the forms.

Godly Leaders

A disciple is not above his master; as a result, Cornerstone Church has high standards for team leaders. We expect and demand that our team leaders live pure lives free from unrepentant sin, believe pure doctrine free from heresy and passionately practice the Great Commission. We expect our team leaders to participate in our church sponsored evangelistic outreaches. We expect them to train other Christians in face-to-face, personal soul winning. We expect them to be in small group and discipleship on a weekly basis and to disciple other Christians. We expect them to conflict in a biblical manner

(Matt. 18:15-17) rather than fighting or leaving the church. No one can be in authority until they have first demonstrated that they can be under authority. A time of testing comes first (1 Tim. 3:10).

Separation from Apostasy

We expect those associated with Cornerstone to separate from apostasy. We expect our members not to financially support any religious organization which denies any of the fundamental truths of the faith.

Expository Bible Preaching

We expect the preacher to "preach the word" – line upon line, precept upon precept. In our day many churches have departed from the faith once delivered to the saints and thus seek to make the lost comfortable in their sin in order to build a large crowd and large offerings. We expect the sermon to be directly from the Bible, authoritative, passionate, convicting and piercing. We value the preacher as a prophet not a politician. We strive to be a church which would love to hear the great prophets of God like Noah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus and the Apostles. The Word of God is God's very words and so must be proclaimed with absolute authority. We commit to responding to true Bible preaching as we would respond to God.

Fundamental Evangelicalism

We are not a liberal, modernist or neo-evangelical church. We take a clear stand on the great fundamentals of the faith. We preach for righteousness and against unrighteousness. When a church stands for something it must stand against something. We are for God and against the devil. We are for sinful people, but against their sin. The gospel is both bad news (about man's sin and separation from God) as well as good news (Christ's death and God's gift).