

ONELIFECHURCH

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One Life Statement of Faith

The Bible

Everything we believe, say and do is founded upon and held accountable to the Bible, which is the inerrant Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

God

There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Jesus

Jesus Christ is the Son of God...and God the Son. He is the Creator of all things who was born to the virgin Mary, died for our sins, rose from the dead and will one day return to earth for all who have placed their faith in Him. (Matthew 1:18; John 3:16; 20:28; Colossians 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)

Salvation

God created humans in His own image to enjoy closeness with Him, but we disobeyed Him, destroying the intimacy of that relationship. We cannot save ourselves, but need God's tender mercy to draw us back to Him. Jesus' death on the cross is payment in full for the sins of all who place our faith in Jesus alone for eternal life. In gratitude, we give up our sins as we follow Him. (Genesis 1:27; 3:8-19; Acts 2:38; Romans 5:12; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10)

The Church

Jesus is the head of the church, through which He expresses His amazing love and awesome purpose on planet Earth. Followers of Christ are to become part of a local church, where they will be taught, strengthened, equipped, held accountable, inspired, empowered and set free to become everything Jesus created them to be. (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:25)

One Life Theological Distinctives

Clear Communication of Biblical Content.

We believe that our language should be inherently incarnational and missional; meaning: the glories and mysteries of heavenly things – brought down to the earth, in earthly terms for the sake of touching human sinners and the advancement of the kingdom. **INCARNATIONAL:** “The LOGOS became FLESH” communicates the essence of Christ’s identity and the primary way in which God chose to reveal himself to mankind. Therefore, it should be the guiding principle of our philosophy of ministry. In His Word, God constantly provides metaphor and understandable and relatable imagery to reveal himself in the world. The incarnational / missional drive of the early church is reflected in their intentional catering of their language to their known audience. We are to do no less. We purposefully avoid technical theological language when it is delivered without an effort to create understanding of the truth it is designed for. The Bible is not written in what has become known as theological language – it is written in marketplace language. Theological language was crafted to summarize and precisely explain the nature of various doctrines not explicitly spelled out all in one place in the marketplace terms of the Bible. Its use is system and accuracy and is highly important. However, metaphor, concrete connection and analogy is the constant and consistent communication method of biblical writers. Therefore it shall be our endeavor in public worship and in our instruction to communicate in this way. This does NOT in any way diminish the force of the truth. It is rather the means through which the truth can and should be communicated for the sake of greatest fruit and accuracy. **MISSIONAL -** To Christians and non – Christians – public worship assumes the existence of “crowds” in the same way Jesus ministry was constantly among the crowds. Crowds from Jesus day forward consist of those who could not hear, those who were shallow, those who were tangled by thorns and those who were fruitful. It was this way in Jesus ministry, it will be in ours. However, the first line of communication is always to the believer for the sake of the development of His faith by molding a biblical world view, but with communication intentionally designed to “make plain” the administration of the mystery of Christ to people at all stages of belief or unbelief. Jesus affirms the existence the various states of the human heart; even telling one man, you are “not far” for the kingdom of God (from which one can infer various degrees of “nearness”). We are not “Seeker sensitive” in the sense that has been caricatured in contemporary debate ; meaning the implication the we are afraid to say or avoid the harsher truths of the Word of God for the sake of pleasing men. Our content and message is driven not first by perceived human need, but by biblical content. Correct interpretation and subsequent clear communication of scripture is the first and foremost priority in all public preaching, teaching and communication. We offer relevant teaching on issues experienced by all people but we do not determine what is communicated based on human desire or by what is perceived as “relevant”. God’s Word IS relevant and sometimes His content and priorities can be far different from ours. Relevant communication in our understanding is an acknowledgement of the laws of wise and effective communication as a means to place the content of the Word of God into the hearts and minds of people. We are simply aware of unregenerate people always present and speak to that reality with the scriptural injunction to love our neighbors as ourselves by being compassionately plain, not do things that would cause them to think we’re out of our minds and with sympathy to the fact that we were once in the very same place of unbelief (Titus 3:1-3). We strive to humbly offer the Word in a way that is memorable, relatable and uncompromisingly truthful.

Authenticity and transparency in public concerning Christian living.

We're honest and open about the ups and downs of Christian life, weaknesses, doubts and the inevitable pain and challenges of the journey. The Word of God is true to the realities of living in a fallen world with fallen flesh. Jesus, while remaining sinless, "offered up loud cries"; stated that his "soul was weary to the point of death". The apostles, the Prophets, Psalm writers are consistent and open about the high's and lows of the journey of the soul. The Psalmists wrote songs of worship intended for public participation which articulate the positives and negatives of inner experiences in seeking God. We acknowledge this fundamental reality publically and unapologetically while all the time reminding ourselves of the roots and strong foundations of our faith. There IS victory in Jesus, but it is won and experienced in process and challenges of life. (Psalm 13, 88, countless others, 2 Corinthians 1< Gethsemane)

The available, discernible leadership of the Holy Spirit. We believe in the reality of—and the gifts of the Spirit in today's world. We believe in the personal leadership of the Holy Spirit in the life of the true believer, church leadership and in public worship. Although we plan our services, we "keep our sails" up allowing for the reality that the Spirit can and will speak to hearts in such a way as to lead in an unplanned direction for the sake of His working as He uses our submission to His will to do a special work He alone knows and directs (I Cor. 12-14)

Intellectual Integrity.

We believe in the importance of the intellect to spiritual understanding. Logic, reason and the basic ability of the human mind to separate fact from falsehood is a necessary truth. This does not mean that the human mind is not clouded, biased toward evil in its fallen state. In fallen men – it is corrupted towards the things of God but is still functional in the basics of human existence and can be enlightened by the grace of God to hear the Word. This is an affirmation that the truths of the faith once for all delivered to the saints are rooted in objective, historical, evidentially discernible reality, not simply personal "faith". True biblical faith is a combination of believing established facts of the gospel and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. We seek to be honorable and truthful by the highest standards in what we communicate and teach. By following the laws of logic and reason and the fundamental reliability of sensory experience, we affirm the place of the mind in Christian faith and practice.

Experience.

We believe in the reality of spiritual experience in the heart of human beings, which can translate as emotional, even physical discernable "feelings" The sense of the presence of God (or absence) is purely biblical and unavoidable in human life. The Bible reflects this in all of its godly portraits and, especially in the highest and best example of Christ himself. Experience is always to be subordinated to and interpreted by the Word of God. However, the Word of God itself reflects experience in the life of the godly and obedient. It is an undeniable and unavoidable part of being human and walking with the Lord. Prayer and worship are the conduit through which most experience comes into church and individual Christian life.

Applied Practical observable principles.

Because of the fact that God has created the world and established its foundations, we believe “wisdom cries aloud in the streets”. The earth was formed by the Lord as reflective of His character and order. A mark of godly wisdom is the ability to observe life and detect and discern applicable principles from the natural world and human enterprise and interaction. We are students of life – as seen through the clear light of scripture. Life is designed by God to be parabolic and metaphorical and constantly communicates the glory and Word of God for those with “ears to hear”. Jesus is Lord of ALL. ALL things were made by him and FOR him. From sports to business to walking down the street, life is formed in such a way as to communicate – even to those who are not yet regenerated and BY those who are not regenerated. Unregenerate men will use principles on which the earth is established for the wrong ends – the building of the wrong kingdom, selfish gain, etc. But, they can and do use the principles of self-discipline, focus, design, planning, vision, mission, unity for the advancements of their purposes. These principles are available to the human mind as a part of being God’s image bearers – even in their rebellious and fallen state. Therefore, through the grid of biblical and Holy Spirit discernment, the Christian is able to use the wisdom of God to observe wise principles even in things of the world – without being, therefore, worldly. Principles are not sinful – sin is sinful. For example, the Temple of God was built on the same architectural principles as the pagan temples. Principles, like the laws of mathematics or engineering are not uniquely godly and only available to believers. Because of the revealed Word of God and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, there is a dimension of church life that can never be understood by or grasped by the unregenerate. However, these subjects concern what it takes to be justified before a Holy God in Christ and through His atoning work and the other truths that historical orthodox Christianity knows is ONLY available through special revelation. Principles of wisdom for human life and enterprise fall under the theological category of general revelation available to all human beings because they are created in God’s image.

Creative expression.

Fallen though it is, creation still speaks of the glory of God and His personality. We believe that creativity is an important distinguishing mark of human uniqueness. In the beginning the revelation of God was his creative power and ability. Artistic communication is unique to humans above all other creatures and therefore should be honored, shaped, enjoyed, trained and encouraged – in keeping with a biblical world view and given a rightful place in the life of the church. What is heretical or sinful and unwise provides the limit of what is allowed creatively. The motivation of the heart of the artist and the church leadership is where the real discernment has to fall. The Bible offers only principles for guidance and no specifics about the use of technology, instruments, design or approach to public worship. It only gives general outlines as to the content and course of worship necessary for the glory of God, the strengthening of the saints and the salvation of sinners. We believe that creative principles can and should be used openly and authentically for the inspiration of worship, the glory of God, the enjoyment of life and the instruction of people. To deny this principle is to throw oneself into a hopeless course of contradictions demonstrated by many who criticize their use while being unable to avoid their use. In short – EVERY Christian enterprise uses some form of creativity, technology, practical insight and human awareness principles. We simply embrace them by setting individuals free to express their God-given abilities and creative intellects in enjoyment and confidence, knowing God has given his people the ability to know and understand his Word, discern that which is useful, good, holy and edifying, based on His revelation and His Spirit. We use the dictates of wisdom and the principles of good stewardship. We unapologetically and creatively use technology, art, human awareness principles, variety and other means being fully aware of their limits, value and unavoidable place in God’s created order.

Making the case to the unbeliever.

Persuasion, positive argument, explanation and reason are not only allowable in an evangelistic enterprise but fundamental to the process of conversion reflecting Paul's methods in Acts – challenging the world view of the mind as well as the loyalties of the heart. This is our role, all the while knowing we cannot and do not save anyone - -this can only be done through the active and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit, who works through human agents and vessels to create understanding of Jesus identity, work and resurrection and personal application. God alone is sovereign over the souls of men but His command to us as His fellow workers is to plant and water according to the principles of His Word and the observed principles of active Christian life. He alone can make things grow.

Intentional and strategic missions locally and globally.

(Active, daily, intentional, strategic, pursuit of the mission to the nations and evangelism to our local community.)

Evangelism, while rooted in the sovereignty of God does not make it, therefore, a fatalistic subject. The scriptures assume intentionality and the active role of real men reaching out to real men in the real world. How can they hear and believe without someone preaching to them and how can they preach unless they are sent? (Romans 10) The constant call to go and pursue, seek the lost did not begin with the New Testament but is thoroughly and absolutely biblical from beginning to end rooted at the beginnings of the fall of man – through the call of Abraham to bless ALL people – to the role of Israel as a light to the nations into the practice and commands of Christ, the sending of the apostles. Missions is a first principle because it captures the last summary command of Christ before His ascension. Therefore, it is to be actively pursued, prayed over, prioritized, lived in daily and functioned in actively, even creatively. It is personal and corporate in nature. Because it is personal it cannot help but be corporate. We are enormously aware that only God can regenerate a human soul but it is thoroughly biblical and fundamentally logical that the intentional taking of the Word to those who do not believe is the overwhelmingly chosen vehicle for redemption of mankind.

The God given value of the individual.

In terms of their God given gifts., calling, talents, essential humanness. This is not in opposition to the glory of God but, in the created order as we experience it, an essential part of it from the human perspective. God, in His self-sufficiency did not need to create human beings. But, according to His own plans and desires and counsels of His will He chose to create and has bestowed on men a “crown of glory and honor” making him a little lower than the angels. This is the very thing that makes his rebellion and sin so heinous and damaging and punishable in the highest degree . In His glory God fashioned man to be a unique bearer of His image (to the point to take an innocent life of a human being is punishable by death). This is an honor no man has in himself or because of himself but was granted by God. In the incarnation Jesus took on real flesh and full humanity without diminishing in any way his divinity. This is significant and shows up in an honoring of the value of human life over other forms of life, seeing those who are lost as valuables worth searching for rather than enemies to be hunted for or avoided. One key way to glorify God and see the core and heart of His Word is to keep human value high (“the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath”). This was a theme of Jesus’ ministry where he confronts the religious leaders who had placed the rules over the essential call to have mercy on individuals and to be sensitive to their real needs whether sin, sickness of poverty because of their humanness. Jesus ministered individually, personally and compassionately while in no way surrendering the severity of the rebuke for disobedience and God’s punishment for those individuals who refuse to repent , believe and obey. The center of the ministry of Christ is incarnation and the seeking and saving of that which is lost. The communication of His Word is through human agents speaking human words. Credit is even given to writers for their contributions. Rightly understood in light of the glory of God and the fact of His being the ultimate source for all things, this in no way diminishes the glory of God nor seeks to place man at the center where he can , even logically, not to mention biblically, never be. It is a holy and simple acknowledgement and a fundamental doctrine of the scriptures that man has been gifted with a unique and special place in the created order for the sake of the purposes, glory and grace of God. To do things with a consciousness of the realities of everyday human life is not to be man-centered but to be in touch with reality of human life, biblical values, the purposes of God for the redemption of mankind and to love our neighbors as ourselves as a command which is “like” the first command – “to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. “