Ministry Philosophy

Imagine being given a new bus as a personal gift. Your new vehicle is not just a normal bus—it is a luxurious touring bus. Inside, you have plush, reclining seats, bathroom facilities, and a state-of-the-art stereo system. Outside, your new bus is painted shimmering silver with tinted windows. Your new bus has all the necessary ingredients for a pleasant, comfortable ride. You are proud of your new bus, and all your friends are impressed with your new bus. Months go by and the luster of your new traveling castle wears off. You commit yourself to rekindle your friends’ original enthusiasm for your bus. One day you decide to pick up all of your friends and take them on a traveling tour. In the middle of your pleasure run, your bus breaks down on a hill. The only way to get your bus fixed is to have all your friends get out of the bus and push it up the hill. The weather is not ideal. Your friends complain that they didn’t get on this bus to work and get dirty, and some decide to stay on the bus. Only a small percentage is willing to get out in the rain and help push.

Now imagine being given the same bus, but this time your purpose has changed. Imagine that your bus is sitting in your driveway, and you get a call from the Fire Chief who tells you that there is a fire in an apartment building across town. Children are trapped in the upper floors of this building! The Fire Chief asks you to gather up as many folks as possible in your bus to help with the life-saving efforts. You hurriedly gather your friends, and they all willingly board your bus. When the bus breaks down this time, there are no complaints about who has to push and who is going to get dirty. Everyone on the bus is committed to saving lives.

Isn’t it amazing how much difference it makes when we understand our purpose? It is no different when we are dealing in spiritual matters. God has ordained a vehicle on earth to accomplish His purposes. That vehicle is the body of Christ--His church. His church’s purpose is to provide people with the life-saving and life-changing message of Jesus Christ. All who come aboard do so by placing their trust in Jesus Christ. In order to be effective, the objectives and motivations of all who are on board are singularly focused on the call God has placed on them. Each person is committed to do whatever he/she can in the life-saving and life-changing efforts. This vehicle has many parts, but all the parts add up to what is called the church.

Christ Community Church is one expression of this vehicle that God has designed. Below you will find some of the nuts and bolts of our endeavor.

**Biblical Foundation**

Biblical instruction is the foundation for determining direction and vision for the church. In the following section, key passages are considered, along with a short comment on their relationship to the church.

**Matthew 28:19-20**

Matthew speaks of the necessity for making disciples, and he addresses the discipleship curriculum as teaching for the sake of action.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

**Acts 1:8**

Christ informs us that there is a spiritual dimension or prerequisite for ministry, namely the power of the Holy Spirit. We also learn that reaching others is a deliberate action.

*"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

**Acts 2:42**

Luke provides us with some necessary elements to add to the corporate life of the body of Christ.

 *“And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*

**I Corinthians 12:4-7**

The Apostle Paul instructs us that ministry is a team approach. Instead of spectatorship, Paul encourages everyone to be focused on the “common good.”

*"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

**Ephesians 4:11-12**

The pastors, along with other leaders, are like coaches helping the players (church body) on the field do their job. Spiritual leadership is therefore synonymous with servanthood.

*"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."*

**Colossians 1:28**

The final “product” of the church is not measured by the size of the buildings or how many are in the congregation. The job of the church is to facilitate an environment that is conducive to Christ-likeness.

*"And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ."*

**II Timothy 2:2**

Ministry of the church should not be strictly a “one to many” format where a crowd comes to hear a polished speaker. When ministries are focused on such an approach, they end up being impersonal and ineffective in establishing meaningful, authentic relationships in the church. There can be no lasting change unless modeling is done in an up-close and personal fashion. Without the context of personal relationships, how effective is spiritual reproduction? We want to take advantage of various environments at CCC including one-on-one, small groups, and a corporate setting.

*"And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."*

**I Peter 4:10**

Petercommunicates that all members of a body are ministers. The church is not one minister with many spectators, but many ministers with leaders who serve the members.

*"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

While these verses do not provide a complete examination of the task for the church, they do provide enough information to give an idea of the general direction for Christ Community Church. Any activity or program within CCC should reflect the above biblical injunctions.

No program of CCC is in cement. If we make a “sacred cow” out of a program, we are in danger of losing sight of the original intent. It is critical that the intent of each ministry is clearly understood. Every ministry should have specific goals that are consistent with the scriptural injunctions for the church. Gene Getz in *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*, is helpful here when he says:

 We must therefore understand why people resist change. But we must also understand that Christians sometimes have “double-trouble.” Because we believe there are things that should never change, we often confuse non-absolutes (those things that should change) with absolutes (things that should not change). Often, this resistance is rooted in insecurity and fear, and it leads to rationalization. After all, what better way to rationalize than to think we are standing for the truth of scripture? However, many Christians resist change because they are honestly confused. They don’t understand the differences between absolutes and non-absolutes. They put “beginning the service with the doxology” in the same

category as the “virgin birth.” Or they think that “meeting at 11 o’clock on Sunday morning” is just as significant as what the Bible teaches about the “second coming of Christ.”

#### Mission Statement

What kind of church is Christ Community Church? This question is often asked when people want to inquire about CCC. Some people prefer the convenience of defining a church by its denominational affiliation. Questioning a church’s affiliation is certainly a fair inquiry. However, we must go deeper. Identity based solely with a denomination is, at best, incomplete.

**One of the ways a church can define its direction is through an accurate mission statement. By accurate, we mean that the mission statement is consistent with biblical truth and unique to the church it represents. Every church, whether it knows it or not, has a mission statement. The mission statement may, in reality, be to compete with another church or to "always do things like we have in the past."**

If a church is going to remain healthy, it must know where it is going and how it is going to get there. An accurate mission statement can help to determine direction and properly identify a local body. The mission statement of Christ Community Church is:

"Equipping and empowering people in their God-given gifts to advance the kingdom of Christ."

Our mission statement addresses the source of our strength being Christ and the purpose of our activity being “equipping” and having “impacting.” How we define impact can be noted below in our discussion on “objectives.” Impacting our world implies that we are to be culturally sensitive, just as any missionary strives for as they minister in a foreign culture. The same cultural sensitivity applies when we minister in the American culture. We are to be creative as we communicate the gospel where God puts us. Our mission statement also addresses both motive and behavior. Organization and organism must both be addressed

As we gaze through Scripture, we see value given to the organism and organization of God’s people. Jethro encouraged Moses to delegate the ministry of Israel to produce better organization. Deacons were instituted to organize the early church and multiply ministry. However, we also see Jesus heading up into the mountains in the early hours of the day to seek the Father before He ministered. We see the disciples waiting on the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room before heading out into church planting.

 *I Corinthians 12:4-7* says, *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”* The Scriptures teach that we are to value the bent and giftedness of members of the body so that we do not create an either/or status, but a both/and dimension. *“But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you.’”* (I Cor. 12:20-21)

When God brought Israel into the Promised Land, He encouraged His people to participate in both organism and organization. The Ark of the Covenant was to be at the center of worship to remind the Israelites of their constant need to depend on God. However, there was also much activity, advancement, and conquering that God commanded. God never saw a dichotomy between depending on Him and acting, but rather saw them each as a necessary part of life in Him. The abiding presence of God provided clear vision and an unshakeable confidence in Him. This confidence was a springboard to act.

Abiding in God does not mean that we sit around and do as little as possible, as if human activity is the antithesis to dependence upon God. Conversely, it does not mean that we busy ourselves with activity and not really consider what it means to abide in Christ in the process. Both extremes are to be guarded against. As believers, our hearts are to be fueled by the person, power, and promises of Christ, and He then moves us to action.

Nehemiah and Ezra were men of great leadership capacity during the days of reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem. Both books, that bear their respective names, demonstrate how each man impacted Israel through his diverse giftedness. Ezra the priest reclaimed the worship of Israel through the sacrificial system. He could be heard reading the Words of God for extended periods to bring the people to a place of abiding in God. *“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel”* (Ezra 7:10)*.* Nehemiah, the public official, was found scouting the wall of Jerusalem, devising a plan and facilitating a tremendous building project. Was one man more important than the other? No. God valued each man and the contribution he made to Israel. Each man’s bent was valuable and necessary to accomplish the will of God.

As the members of CCC embark upon new frontiers, we must be careful not to discredit the bent God has given to each person. Organization must be baptized in the power, presence, and person of Christ. Let us say, “Amen” for all calls to abide in Him. However, there are also times when those praying at the altar must be shaken to get out to the wall and repair a breach.

**Objectives**

Jesus seemed to reserve His most scathing rebuke for those in the religious establishment. It is not that religious people are inherently worse than others. The problem is religion can often create a veil over the mind and heart that makes it difficult to see our need for Christ. Jesus said He came to minister to those who are sick—not to the healthy. Those who know they are sick will be open to get help. Those who say they are healthy often think they are okay and don’t need the kind of help that those “real sinners” need.

Religion can be unhealthy when it foists a veil over the real issues of the heart. Ephesians 6:6demonstrates the importance of Christians having obedience start from the right heart when it says*,* “not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God *from the heart.”*

A veil can be practicing certain sub-cultural behavioral codes that are revered in a denomination or church and thinking such practices are the trump card or designation of real Christianity. These codes can refer to dress, schooling practices, or prohibited activities that mark one in that culture as truly “Christian.”

Another veil can be doctrinal partisanship. Christians are judged “in” or “out” by holding to certain designations such as “reformed” or “Pentecostal” or “dispensational” and the list goes on. A recent inquirer from our web site asked about certain doctrinal positions for CCC and I communicated some thoughts that I think are pertinent for our discussion here:

I appreciate your regard for orthodoxy and find it refreshing that there are still people out there who care about the doctrine of a church. We would however say that orthopraxis (our practice or behavior) should follow our orthodoxy. We do not think that our sanctification in Christ is found in just what we believe or in holding the right doctrines alone. Of course believing right doctrine is critical to our walk in Christ. However, our doctrine is to move us to act, behave in a way that makes us salt and light to the world and provides the unity, love, grace, and holiness that are to be expressed in our lives. A church that has the right doctrine, but does not express unity, grace, holy living, and a heart for the lost is a dead church. You can’t sustain the right behavior on bad doctrine, but I have witnessed many dead churches that hold allegiance to certain manmade credos thinking they were healthy. It is our desire at CCC to have orthodoxy and orthpraxis work in unison.

Consider the following biblical passages that speak of a healthy orthopraxis.

*“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* (1 Timothy 1:5)Notice that doctrine has a goal. The goal is love from a pure heart and a good conscience.

 *“Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies*.” (1 Corinthians 8:1)Knowledge alone in the Christian life actually has a negative effect because it creates an arrogance and partisanship. Unity in the body of Christ will be the result when biblical knowledge is fused with the right heart and actions.

 *"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophesy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”* (1 Corinthians 13:1-2)

In the above passage, Paul doesn’t just stop with doctrine alone. I could also speak to angels and have the gift of tongues. I could preach better than Chuck Swindoll. I could know special revelations from God and understand secrets that others don’t know. I could explain with perfect clarity the right eschatology and get rid of any tension between man’s free will and the sovereignty of God. I could have the kind of faith that does miracles, produces healings, and does other wonderful things for the people of God. I could do all these things, and yet, if I am not relating well to God and to others (love) it amounts to nothing in God’s eyes.

Love for God and others is the trump card. Love separates the immature from the mature when it comes to spirituality. Love is what Jesus prayed for to be seen in His children (John 17:20-23*).* Perhaps this is why John said later the greatest thing that gave him joy was to see his children know and ***walk*** the truth. (III John 3)

Not only does a good orthopraxis spring from a correct understanding of scripture, but it is also consistent with our mission. The Church has struggled for centuries and continues to struggle to keep doctrine targeted toward personal transformation. People can get hung up on issues of doctrine or nonessential practices and miss the log in the eye of the church.

Consider Nehemiah, who exhibited a leadership that focused on essential matters. Remember when the wall around Jerusalem was in such disrepair, and God called Nehemiah to build it up in the face of tremendous opposition? We read in Nehemiah 4:16-23 that the Israelites were to have a brick in one hand and a sword in another. Instead of a group split apart and nitpicking at each other, the Israelites enjoyed one of the greatest moments in their history as a focused unified body. *“At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us”* was the cry. How do you suppose they could have pulled off such a great feat if they were arm’s length apart at the wall and criticizing one another for the clothes they wore, or that they worshipped too slow or too fast, or whether the guy on their right was pre-millennial? Such actions would have appeared grossly out of place, and so disloyal to the cause, that a person would have certainly thought long and hard before daring to stoop so low.

Our mission--our “wall to build”--is to disciple others. Our mission statement says that we are "Equipping and empowering people in their God-given gifts to advance the kingdom of Christ." Because of the urgency of our mission, because of the importance of this calling, all other endeavors pale in comparison. Many Christians waste time with infighting and fretting over lesser issues because they miss the joy that comes from having their hearts beat consistent with our Lord. The mission of CCC is not to create one event after another, but to see individuals transformed by the gospel and loving others toward the same.

Consider the following discipleship objectives that clearly call our community of faith to action. As a member of CCC, you are agreeing to make these biblical principles life-long, heartfelt objectives. Instead of calling members to be faithful to programs, CCC is calling each and every member to be faithful to biblical objectives and allowing freedom for God to establish those programs that are culturally sensitive and biblically consistent.

CCC Discipleship Objectives

1. A faithful follower of Christ accepts the call of discipleship as normative for all believers. Discipleship is not optional, but a call is given to every person who claims to be a follower of Christ. As such, a faithful follower of Christ seeks to live under the complete Lordship of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:19-20, Luke 9:23-27, 57-62, 14:25-35, John 13:35, II Tim. 2:1-2)
2. A faithful follower of Christ seeks to think and act consistently with a biblical worldview. Such a worldview permeates every area of life--including personal, family, vocational, and social realms. (Deut. 6:1-9, Romans 12:1-2, Phil. 4:8-13, Col. 3:17)
3. A faithful follower of Christ is a good steward of time, treasure, and talent. They acknowledge the ownership of God, and the need to use all time, treasure, and talent for His pleasure and glory. (Psalm 24:1, Luke 16:1-13, Acts 2:45-47, 4:3, 2 Cor.9: 6-13, 1 Tim. 6:17-19)
4. A faithful follower of Christ seeks to live a life of personal holiness, motivated from a heart dependent upon the indwelling Christ. Personal holiness includes not being conformed to values of the world system inconsistent with a biblical worldview (materialism, vengeance, self-promotion, etc.), and includes abstaining from sexual immorality. (Rom. 12:1-2, I Cor. 6:12-20, Gal. 2:20-21, 5:16-24, Phil.2:13, Col. 3:1-17, I Thess. 4:3-8)
5. A faithful follower of Christ lives a life that is evangelistically sensitive, building bridges to the unchurched. We are to be sensitive that we do not view unchurched people as a project, but instead we love and respect all people, understanding that they are made in the image of God and are in need of forgiveness of sin. (Gen. 1:27, I Chron. 12:32, Prov. 14:12, Acts 17:16-34, I Cor. 9:12-27, I Tim. 2:1-4)
6. A faithful follower of Christ loves and supports the local expression of the body of Christ and supports the church through time, treasure, and talent for the equipping of the saints, participating in the discipleship process of

believers, and spreading the gospel for the glory of God. Valuing the body of Christ includes maintaining a quality of relationship with members characterized by grace, loyalty, and the resolving of conflicts. (Matt. 28:19-20, I Cor. 12:4-26, 16:1-2, Eph 4:1-32)

1. A faithful follower of Christ upholds and lives consistently with God’s design for the family as expressed in scripture, including the biblical framework for marriage, parenting, and singleness. (Gen. 2:24-25, Matt. 19:1-12, I Cor. 7:1-40, Eph 5:15-6:4)
2. A faithful follower of Christ seeks to cultivate an abiding, intimate relationship with God through personal and corporate means of worship, Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and service. Such disciplines are not the goal, but a means toward a more Christ-dependent life. (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 5:3, 119:148,Mark 1:35, Acts 2:42-47, Heb 10:24-25)
3. A faithful follower of Christ does not favor those rich in this world, but is devoted to warmly receiving, giving, and loving the poor, widows, orphans, and those typically considered outcasts in society. (Luke 9:1-6, 14:12-24, James 1:27, 2:14-17, I Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19)

When all the planning is done and all the results are in, we must recognize that the fruit of ministry is only “‘*By My Spirit’ saith the Lord.”* The Apostle Paul offers a proper perspective for church ministry when he writes in I Corinthians 3:6-8,  *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”* Ultimately any fruit that comes out of CCC is a result of the handiwork of God.