

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

Seven Guiding Values

1. A Culture of Believing Prayer and Intercession

Biblical Basis

In His humanity Jesus was utterly devoted to prayer (Luke 5:16; 6:12-16; 9:18; 9:28-29), and he taught his disciples to be also (Luke 11:1-13; 22:39-46). The Apostles learned this from Jesus and passed on to the early church the importance of devoting themselves to personal and corporate prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42). The Apostle Paul also exhorted the churches to make believing prayer a central emphasis of life and ministry together (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). By His perfect sacrifice for sin Jesus is the perfect mediator between Holy God and sinful humanity (1 Timothy 2:5). Through Him we can approach God now with boldness and confidence, and He calls us to do so (Hebrews 4:14-16). The Church is to come before Him continually with spiritual sacrifices of praise (Hebrews 13:15), the sacrifice of our own lives (Romans 12:1), and fervent intercession for one another and for His Kingdom to come in this world (1 Peter 5:7; James 5:13-18; Matthew 9:36-38)!

2. Healthy Pastors

Biblical Basis

The local church pastor is an “under-shepherd” charged with leading a portion of those who belong to Christ (1 Peter 5:2-4). All pastoral care, direction, protection and nurture find their Source in Christ, the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for us as seen through the “I Am” statements of Christ (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9-11, 14-15; 14:6; 15:1-5). Therefore, the local church pastor must find his or her identity and ministry passion solely in Christ Jesus and must lead the flock as much by personal example as by teaching (1 Timothy 4:11-16; Philippians 1:21; Ephesians 1:3-14). A healthy pastor does nothing out of selfish ambition or personal gain, but is compelled by the love of Christ (Philippians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 5:14), grows continuously in both skill and in the fruit of the Spirit (2 Peter 1:3-8; Galatians 5:22-23), and has a clear understanding of his or her calling before God – multiplying himself or herself through the making of disciples, co-leaders, and more pastors (2 Timothy 1:3-7; 2:1-2).

further reading:

http://www.parkstreet.org/qa_women

<http://jswat.net/cccc/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/PPLH - Ministerial Standing of Women.pdf>

3. Healthy Disciple-making Churches

Biblical Basis

The New Testament teaches that the Church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 1:22). The Church is God’s new community, His household (Ephesians 2:19-22). Christ died “to purify for Himself a people that are his very own” (Titus 2:14). So the Church (*ekklesia* = called out assembly) is called out of the world to belong to God, but it is also sent back into the world to witness and to serve (1 Peter 2:9). Our mission is modeled on the mission of Jesus (John 20:21). It is an incarnational mission of going into the world to make disciples who will love God and love others and multiply (Matthew 28:18-20; 22:37-40). The picture of “healthy” church life as described in Acts (2:42-47, 11:19-30, and 13:1-3), was a body of believers devoted to apostolic teaching, *koinonia* (sharing life and mission together), breaking of bread (worship and Eucharist), and prayer. This way of life together was inherently missional and “the Lord added daily to their number those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47) Multiplying disciples was normative, and multiplying communities of disciples in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth was what the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to empower the Church to do (Acts 1:8).

4. Healthy Church Multiplication

Biblical Basis

Jesus taught that a faith response to his incarnation and message of salvation would result in the establishment of the church(es) (Matthew 16:15-18). His final commandment to his disciples was to live as witnesses of his life and message (Acts 1:8) and be involved in a life of making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). The Book of Acts teaches that

the church was the primary vehicle for this disciple-making ministry¹. Healthy churches, seeking the will of God and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, became multiplying churches (Acts 13:1-3). Paul's missionary journeys are more appropriately called, "Paul's church planting journeys". More churches developed more disciples which in turn resulted in more churches (Galatians 1:1-5). All New Testament letters, with the exception of Philemon, were written to address the needs of churches and pastors. Church multiplication was a normative part of the life of churches birthed in the first century.

5. A Community that Lives Out Shared Life & Shared Mission

Biblical Basis

God exists as one God in a community of three unique persons (Genesis 1:26, 11:7, Deuteronomy 6:4, etc.). Not only did he create humankind in his image, but Jesus himself, to whom the whole church belongs, revealed to what end he has shared his glory with his community of followers when he said in John 17:22, *"that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."* In that statement is a unity in the church likened to that of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (perfect unity yet distinct), united by love of God for the common purpose of his saving work on earth ("so that the world...").

The Christian life is depicted as a meal hosted by the Lord and shared by Christ's faithful at his invitation and preparation through his death and resurrection (see Isaiah 25:6, Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 11:25, etc.). The church brought to table with the Lord at once reveals a community that is:

1. A family unit (shared life); see Romans 8:16, Mat. 12:46-50, Romans 16:1-16
 2. Submitted to Christ as the host (his purpose becomes our common mission in bringing others to the table); see Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:22-23
 3. Reconciled to God and one another (a place of peace); see Genesis 31:46, Exodus 24:11
4. Eating/using what the Lord provides (shared gifts through the Spirit); see Ephesians 4:4-16

6. A Culture of Peacemaking and Reconciliation

Special Preamble on "Shalom"

Since the fall of Adam mankind has craved Shalom (2 Corinthians 5:16-20). Shalom is defined as completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, and harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. Shalom begins in the reconciliation work of Christ (Ephesians 1:7-14) and continues with reconciliation between those who believe (Matt 18:15-20) and with those who do not (Hebrews 12:14). Jesus in preparing His disciples for His bodily departure bolstered their devotion by leaving and giving them His Shalom (John 14:27). It was the very thing they longed for and would need in order to do the things Christ did.

The term "peacemaking" gives us the impression of two differing opinions or sides whom now "get along." The concept of Shalom is much different. While Peacemaking is man-centered Shalom is God-centered. Peacemaking is about arbitration or flexing of opinions. Shalom is about mirroring God's image and character. The focus of Shalom is Jesus not rules and guidelines. Peacemaking is about what's right. Shalom is about what is righteous.

Biblical Basis

In Ephesians 2:14-18 Paul defines Jesus as our Peace. In Matthew 11:28-30 Christ says, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* This light burden refers to the Ten Commandments that were summed up in just two statements, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Matthew 22:37&39). It is those who live in shalom who mirror the image of Christ. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

7. A Membership Reflective of the Harvest Field's Diversity

Biblical Basis

In His Great Commission, Jesus commands the church *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”* (Matthew 28:19). He simply and clearly states, “all nations,” not just the ones we like or that are close by or that agree with us.

The body of Christ is composed of all people groups (Galatians 3:26-28), breaking down all human barriers such as race, economic status, gender, or even generations. This has been evident since Pentecost which fulfilled the prophecy that, *“I will pour out my Spirit on all people”* (Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:17-18).

Practicing for heaven is a worthwhile earthly exercise. Worshipers in heaven recognize the work of Christ to ransom *“people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth”* (Revelation 5:9-10). One day the kingdom will be comprised of every people group together exercising authority on earth. In the church we are to demonstrate on earth, right now, what will be in his glorious kingdom.