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VINEYARD USA
A COMMUNITY OF CHURCHES

CORE VALUES & BELIEFS



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CORE VALUES & BELIEFS

FORWARD

Our core values and beliefs booklet is an attempt to provide a brief summary of who the Vineyard is and what we believe. Our Statement of Purpose is a concise affirmation of why we exist. Our Core Values give meaning to all that we do. They also drive our purpose, define what is central to us, position the Vineyard in the larger body of Christ and remove ambiguity in mission. You can learn much more about our Core Values if you visit www.vineyardusa.org. Finally, our Statement of Faith provides the foundation for all that we are.

The Statement of Faith is based on the Bible. The Bible is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice. However, since the Bible is a diverse collection of narrative stories, poetry, law, and letters, it is helpful to summarize its teaching in a concise form that can be comprehended by both those deeply rooted in the church and those who have little exposure to the Bible. This is the historical function that the ancient universal church creeds played in the first four hundred years of Christ-centered faith.

It is also important for each community of faith to express these ancient truths in their own language, and not merely adopt the language of another age and culture. Every community of faith has two major obligations in regards to its faith, namely absolute faithfulness to the Word of God and sensitivity to the world in which they live. This means that the Vineyard movement must express the historical, biblical, orthodox Christian beliefs that we hold in common with all Christians and the particular doctrines that are our distinctive voice in terms that are relevant to 21st century Christians.

Our Statement of Faith is based on the conviction that the kingdom of God is the central theological motif that gives definition to all that we believe. It is a kingdom of God centered theology. This statement is our best current understanding of the Bible from that kingdom perspective. Our prayer is that God will bless our sincere attempt to be humble ambassadors of His rule and reign and to be a people that practice the presence of God and proclaim His Gospel, so that His will may be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

For the greater glory of God and the well-being of people!

Phil Strout

NATIONAL DIRECTOR • VINEYARD USA

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OUR MISSION

The mission of Vineyard USA is to join God's mission in the world by building a community of churches that are proclaiming and practicing the full message and reality of the kingdom of God.

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OUR CORE VALUES

The Theology and Practice of the Kingdom of God

Vineyard is committed to the theology and practice of the kingdom of God, rooted in the vision of the Hebrew prophets and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. We have been commissioned to proclaim the good news of the kingdom bearing witness to the already and not yet of the kingdom in words and deeds.

Vineyard is a movement distinctively centered in a renewed understanding of the centrality of the kingdom of God in biblical thought. We view the kingdom of God as the overarching and integrating theme of the Bible.

From our beginnings Vineyard has been committed to the proclamation of the kingdom of God and to bearing witness to the deeds of the kingdom through healing (physical, emotional, and social), doing justice, and delivering those held captive by evil. Since the kingdom of God is the future reign of God breaking into the present through the life and ministry of Jesus, we are a forward-leaning movement emphasizing the ever-reforming nature of the church engaging the world in love.

Experiencing God

The kingdom of God is not a geo-political territory, nor is it the people of God. Rather, the kingdom of God is a dynamic realm. When one enters the kingdom she/he experiences the dynamic reality which exists within the triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This means that the experience of the kingdom of God (and thus, the experience of God's presence) is central to our faith and Christian life.

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God is eager to be known and experienced by all. We believe that God is searching for lost humanity in order to draw us into intimate relationship with Himself. In response to God's initiative, we value the life-changing power of the experience of His presence.

The primary place where that relationship is nurtured and developed is in the act of worship—both private and corporate. So, experience-based worship is the central activity of all that we do in the Vineyard. It is worship that causes all else that we do to become an act of worship. We experience God's presence as a palpable reality when we worship. As we worship we become increasingly sensitive and responsive to the Spirit's presence so that we can do as Jesus did: "See what the Father is doing," (JOHN 5:19) and support His work with our lives.

The experience of God flowing out of a life of worship affects all aspects of our life so that all division between the secular and the sacred vanish. We believe that the Spirit distributes His gifts to us resulting in prophecy, prayer languages, healing, miracles and many other gifts as we joyfully experience His presence.

We value an approach to God's presence that is respectful both of God and of those we are with. We eschew hype and other efforts to manipulate either God's presence or the response of others to His presence. We distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the human response which shares in all the beauty and brokenness of our humanity. We also believe that as we experience His presence through Christ by the Spirit we will be made more fully human and better reflections of the God-image that we were created to be.

OUR CORE VALUES

Culturally Relevant Mission

The church exists for the sake of those who are exiled from God. We are called to bring the gospel of the kingdom to every nook and cranny of creation, faithfully translating the message of Jesus into language and forms that are relevant to diverse peoples and cultures.

We seek to plant churches that are culturally relevant in a wide variety of settings locally and internationally. Each Vineyard church is encouraged to reach those in its community not already reached by existing churches. To this end, we promote a creative, entrepreneurial and innovative approach to ministry that is faithful to Jesus and expressive of His heart to reach those who are far away from God.

Reconciling Community

Jesus is reconciling humans to God, to each other, and to the entire creation, breaking down divisions between Jew & Gentile, slave & free, male and female. Therefore, we are committed to becoming healing communities engaged in the work of reconciliation wherever sin and evil hold sway.

We seek to be diverse communities of hope that realize the power of the cross to reconcile what has been separated by sin. This requires us to move beyond our personal preferences to engage those who are perceived to be unlike us and to actively break down barriers of race, culture, gender, social class and ethnicity.

We are convinced that the church, locally, nationally and globally, is meant to be a diverse community precisely because Jesus is Lord over every nation, tribe and tongue. We are not satisfied with the status quo when it doesn't reflect this kingdom reality, but are eager to pray for the coming of God's kingdom here and now and to realize this mark of the kingdom in our midst.

Compassionate Ministry

We lean toward the lost, the poor, the outcast, and the outsider with the compassion of Jesus as sinners whose only standing before God is utterly dependent on the mercy of God. This mercy can only be truly received inasmuch as we are willing to give it away.

We believe that ministry in Jesus' name should be expressed in concrete ways through the local church. The poor are to be served as though serving Jesus Himself. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a church expressing the love of Christ in a local community.

In all forms of ministry, compassion is a hallmark of the one who was moved with compassion Himself in the face of human need. This being the age of grace and "the year of the Lord's favor," compassion should constitute the leading edge of our service to God, each other and a broken world. As such, we seek to avoid unauthorized judgments of others, realizing that we are all fellow sufferers and strugglers with the rest of humanity.

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OUR OBJECTIVES

- 01 Build an expanding community of churches both in the United States and abroad that are committed to one another and to the message and practice of the kingdom of God.
- 02 Establish and promote a common corporate vision for the community of churches.
- 03 Maintain the core values and practices of the Vineyard.
- 04 Plant and adopt churches which are committed to and practicing the core values of the Vineyard.
- 05 Offer pastoral care, relationship, and other resources to pastors of local Vineyard churches.
- 06 Lead the Vineyard in theological reflection and maintaining historical orthodoxy and praxis.
- 07 Exercise discipline over local church pastors in case of misconduct or heresy.
- 08 Protect the good name of the Vineyard.
- 09 Approve pastors for local Vineyard churches.
- 10 Resource local Vineyard churches to carry out their mission.
- 11 Work to express the unity of Christ by intentionally joining with the broader body of Christ in common witness and love.
- 12 Provide appropriate leadership structure to achieve these objectives.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

God the King and the Holy Trinity

WE BELIEVE that God is the Eternal King. He is an infinite, unchangeable Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, goodness, justice, power and love. From all eternity He exists as the One Living and True God in three persons of one substance, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory.

God the King: The Creator and Ruler of all things

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom is everlasting. From His throne, through His Son, His eternal Word, God created, upholds and governs all that exists: the heavenly places, the angelic hosts, the universe, the earth, every living thing and human beings. God created all things very good.

Counterfeit Kingdom: Satan and Demonic Hosts

WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally a great, good angel, rebelled against God, taking a host of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and, as a usurper of God's rule, established a counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth.

The Kingdom in Creation, The Fall, and The Doctrine of Original Sin

WE BELIEVE that God created mankind in His image, male and female, for relationship with Himself and to govern the earth. Under the temptation of Satan, our original parents fell from grace, bringing sin, sickness and God's judgment of death to the earth. Through the fall, Satan and his demonic hosts gained access to God's good creation. Creation now experiences the consequences and effects of Adam's original sin. Human beings are born in sin, subject to God's judgment of death and captive to Satan's kingdom of darkness.

God's Providence, Kingdom Law and Covenants

WE BELIEVE that God did not abandon His rule over the earth which He continues to uphold by His providence. In order to bring redemption, God established covenants which revealed His grace to sinful people. In the covenant with Abraham, God bound Himself to His people Israel, promising to deliver them from bondage to sin and Satan and to bless all the nations through them.

WE BELIEVE that as King, God later redeemed His people by His mighty acts from bondage in Egypt and established His covenant through Moses, revealing His perfect will and our obligation to fulfill it. The law's purpose is to order our fallen race and to make us conscious of our moral responsibility. By the work of God's Spirit, it convicts us of our sin and God's righteous judgment against us and brings us to Christ alone for salvation.

WE BELIEVE that when Israel rejected God's rule over her as King, God established the monarchy in Israel and made an unconditional covenant with David, promising that his heir would restore God's kingdom and reign over His people as Messiah forever.

Christ the Mediator and Eternal King

WE BELIEVE that in the fullness of time, God honored His covenants with Israel and His prophetic promises of salvation by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, as fully God and fully human in one person, He is humanity as God intended us to be. Jesus was anointed as God's Messiah and empowered by the Holy Spirit, inaugurating God's kingdom reign on earth, overpowering the reign of Satan by resisting temptation, preaching the good news of salvation, healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Gathering His disciples, He reconstituted God's people as His Church to be the instrument of His kingdom.

After dying for the sins of the world, Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day, fulfilling the covenant of blessing given to Abraham. In His sinless, perfect life Jesus met the demands of the law and in His atoning death on the cross He took God's judgment for sin which we deserve as law-breakers. By His death on the cross He also disarmed the demonic powers. The covenant with David was fulfilled in Jesus' birth from David's house, His Messianic ministry, His glorious resurrection from the dead, His ascent into heaven and His present rule at the right hand of the Father. As God's Son and David's heir, He is the eternal Messiah-King, advancing God's reign throughout every generation and throughout the whole earth today.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church at Pentecost in power, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ and releasing the gifts of the Spirit to them. The Spirit brings the permanent indwelling presence of God to us for spiritual worship, personal sanctification, building up the Church, gifting us for ministry, and driving back the kingdom of Satan by the evangelization of the world through proclaiming the word of Jesus and doing the works of Jesus.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe in the filling or the empowering of the Holy Spirit, often a conscious experience, for ministry today. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit and in the exercise of all of the biblical gifts of the Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Spirit, for healing, and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and serve the Church.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Sufficiency of Scripture

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Holy Scripture so that the Bible is without error in the original manuscripts. We receive the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments as our final, absolute authority, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

The Power of the Gospel over the Kingdom of Darkness

WE BELIEVE that the whole world is under the domination of Satan and that all people are sinners by nature and choice. All people therefore are under God's just judgment. Through the preaching of the Good News of Jesus and the Kingdom of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates, justifies, adopts and sanctifies through Jesus by the Spirit all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. By this they are released from Satan's domain and enter into God's kingdom reign.

The Church: Instrument of the Kingdom

WE BELIEVE in the one, holy, universal Church. All who repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and form the living Body of Christ, of which He is the head and of which we are all members.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are available to all believers.

The Kingdom of God and the Final Judgment

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom has come in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to come in the ministry of the Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible and triumphant appearing of Christ—His return to the earth as King. After Christ returns to reign, He will bring about the final defeat of Satan and all of his minions and works, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment and the eternal blessing of the righteous and eternal conscious punishment of the wicked. Finally, God will be all in all and His kingdom, His rule and reign, will be fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, recreated by His mighty power, in which righteousness dwells and in which He will forever be worshipped.

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

God the King and the Holy Trinity

Deuteronomy 33:27 • Isaiah 44:6 • Romans 1:20 • Psalm 95:3 • Isaiah 43:15 • Psalm 147:5 • Job 11:7-9 • James 1:17 • John 4:24 • Matthew 5:48 • Isaiah 6:3 • 1 Peter 1:15-16 • Psalm 104:24 • Proverbs 2:6 • Isaiah 28:29 • Exodus 33:19 • Psalm 31:19 • Psalm 33:5 • Psalm 89:14 • Isaiah 30:18 • Exodus 15:6 • Psalm 63:2 • 1 John 4:8 • Isaiah 43:13 • Isaiah 45:5 • 1 Corinthians 8:4 • Psalm 42:2 • Psalm 84:2 • Jeremiah 10:10 • John 1:18 • John 10:30 • John 14:9 • John 14:16-17 • John 14:26 • John 15:26 • 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 • John 1:1 • John 1:14 • 2 Corinthians 3:17 • Matthew 28:19-20 • 2 Corinthians 13:14 • Revelation 1:4 • Revelation 5:13 • Ephesians 3:14-21

God the King: The Creator and Ruler of all things

Psalm 45:6 • Psalm 145:13 • Daniel 4:3 • Psalm 93:1-2 • John 1:1-3 • 1 Corinthians 8:6 • Colossians 1:15-16 • Hebrews 1:1-2 • Genesis 1:1 • Psalm 95:3-5 • Colossians 1:17 • Hebrews 1:3 • Psalm 103:19 • Psalm 104:24-29 • Psalm 96:4-6 • Psalm 89:11 • Psalm 103:20-21 • Colossians 1:16-17 • Psalm 104:5 • Psalm 103:22 • Psalm 22:28 • Psalm 47:8 • Genesis 1:31

Counterfeit Kingdom: Satan and Demonic Hosts

Revelation 12:7-9 • 2 Corinthians 11:14 • Colossians 1:13-14 • Ephesians 6:12 • Mark 3:22-26 • Ephesians 2:1-2 • 1 John 5:19

The Kingdom in Creation, The Fall and The Doctrine of Original Sin

Genesis 1:26-27 • Genesis 1:26 • Genesis 3:1 • Revelation 12:9 • Genesis 3:8 • Romans 1:21 • Romans 5:16 • Romans 5:12 • John 5:14 • 1 Corinthians 15:22 • John 8:44 • 1 John 5:19 • Romans 8:20-23 • Psalm 51:5 • Galatians 1:3-5 • Galatians 4:8-9 • Colossians 1:13

God's Providence, Kingdom Law and Covenants

Psalm 24:1 • Psalm 96:10 • Isaiah 40:22 • Hebrews 1:3 • Romans 9:4 • Ephesians 2:12 • Genesis 17:3-8 • Genesis 12:2-3 • Genesis 15:4-6 • Romans 4:3-5 • Romans 4:16 • Romans 4:20-25 • Galatians 3:6-9 • Galatians 3:13-14 • Exodus 15:3-18 • Exodus 19:3-6 • Exodus 24:3-4 • Exodus 24:7 • Romans 8:3-4 • Romans 8:12-14 • Deuteronomy 5:1-3 • Deuteronomy 30:15-18 • Galatians 3:23-25 • Psalm 25:8-10 • Romans 7:7 • John 15:26 • John 16:8-11 • 2 Corinthians 3:14-17 • Romans 7:13 • Galatians 3:19 • Galatians 3:21-22 • Romans 2:1-11 • Galatians 3:24 • Philippians 3:8-9 • 1 Samuel 8:6-8 • 1 Samuel 8:21-22 • 1 Samuel 9:15-16 • 1 Samuel 10:1 • 1 Samuel 10:24 • 2 Samuel 7:11B-16 • Psalm 89:34-37 • Isaiah 9:6-7 • Isaiah 11:1-5 • Jeremiah 23:5-6 • Ezekiel 34:23

Christ the Mediator and Eternal King

Mark 1:15 • Galatians 4:4 • Romans 1:2-4 • John 1:14 • John 1:17-18 • Luke 1:30-35 • John 1:14 • Philippians 2:5-7 • Romans 5:19 • 1 Corinthians 15:22 • 1 Peter 2:22 • 2 Corinthians 5:21 • Romans 8:29 • Luke 3:21-22 • Luke 4:16-21 • Mark 1:14-15 • Luke 11:20 • Luke 17:20-21 • Luke 4:1-13 • Luke 4:43 • Luke 4:40 • Luke 4:41 • Luke 7:14-17 • Mark 1:16-17 • Mark 3:13-15 • Matthew 16:18 • Luke 9:1-2 • Luke 10:1-17 • John 1:29 • John 6:51 • 1 John 4:9-10 •

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Mark 8:31 • 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 • Galatians 3:13-14 • Acts 3:14-15 • Hebrews 4:15 • Romans 5:18-19 • 1 Peter 2:24 • Galatians 3:13 • 2 Corinthians 5:21 • Romans 1:18 • Romans 1:32 • Romans 2:12 • 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 • Colossians 2:13-15 • Matthew 1:1 • Luke 1:68-72 • Luke 2:10-11 • Matthew 9:27 • Acts 2:24-28 • Acts 2:29-36 • Romans 1:1-4 • Hebrews 1:1-3 • 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 • Ephesians 1:19-23 • Revelation 5:5

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 • Acts 2:1-4 • 1 Corinthians 12:13 • 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 • John 14:16-17 • Romans 12:1 • Ephesians 5:18-20 • Romans 8:3-4 • 1 Corinthians 14:12 • 1 Corinthians 14:26 • Romans 12:4-6 • Luke 11:20 • 1 John 3:8 • Ephesians 6:10-20 • John 14:12-13 • Romans 15:18-19 • 1 Corinthians 4:20 • Romans 8:9-10 • John 16:7 • John 14:26 • John 16:13-15 • Romans 8:14 • Luke 24:49 • Acts 4:31 • Acts 8:18-19 • Acts 19:1-2 • 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 • 2 Corinthians 4:7 • 2 Corinthians 6:4-7 • Joel 2:28-29 • Acts 2:15-17 • 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 • 1 Corinthians 14:1 • 1 Corinthians 14:5 • 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 • Acts 8:14-17 • Acts 19:6 • Mark 1:41 • Luke 6:18B-19 • Mark 16:18 • Acts 13:1-3 • 1 Timothy 4:14 • 2 Timothy 1:6

The Sufficiency of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17 • 2 Peter 1:20-21 • 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 • John 14:26 • Psalm 19:7-9 • Psalm 119:30 • Psalm 119:43 • Psalm 119:89 • Matthew 5:17-18 • John 3:34 • John 10:35 • 1 Thessalonians 2:13 • Revelation 22:6 • Luke 24:44 • 2 Peter 3:15-16 • Revelation 22:18-19 • Isaiah 40:8 • Matthew 24:35 • Matthew 7:21 • Matthew 7:24 • Luke 1:38 • James 1:22-25

The Power of the Gospel Over the Kingdom of Darkness

Luke 4:5-7 • 1 John 5:19 • 1 Corinthians 15:22 • Ephesians 2:1-3 • Romans 1:21-23 • Romans 1:32 • Romans 1:18 • Romans 2:5 • 2 Corinthians 5:10 • Ephesians 5:6 • Mark 1:14-15 • Acts 8:12 • Acts 28:31 • Ephesians 5:5 • John 16:7-11 • John 3:5-8 • 1 Peter 1:23 • Romans 5:1-2 • Romans 5:9 • Romans 8:15 • Galatians 4:6 • Ephesians 5:25 • Hebrews 13:12 • 1 Peter 1:1-2 • Acts 2:38 • Romans 10:9 • 1 John 4:13-15 • Colossians 1:13-14 • Philippians 3:20

The Church: Instrument of the Kingdom

John 17:20-21 • Ephesians 4:3-6 • 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 • Matthew 16:17-18 • 1 Corinthians 1:2 • Ephesians 2:18-19 • 1 Peter 2:9-10 • Titus 3:4-7 • Romans 12:4-5 • Ephesians 1:22 • Ephesians 5:23 • 1 Corinthians 12:27

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Matthew 28:19-20 • 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The Kingdom of God and the Final Judgment

Daniel 7:13-14 • Matthew 4:23 • Matthew 12:28 • Matthew 6:10 • Matthew 10:7-8 • Matthew 24:14 • Mark 13:11 • John 15:26-27 • Romans 14:17-18 • Mark 13:26 • Acts 1:9-11 • 2 Thessalonians 2:8 • Revelation 19:11-16 • Matthew 25:31-32 • 1 Corinthians 15:23-25 • Revelation 20:10 • 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 • John 5:28-30 • Revelation 20:11-15 • Matthew 25:31-46 • 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 • 1 Timothy 6:13-16 • 2 Peter 3:13 • Revelation 21:5 • Revelation 21:27 • 1 Timothy 1:17 • Revelation 7:9-12

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