



Missions Policy

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As approved by the Elders on Jan. 1, 2018

SECTION A: PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

A 1. THE PURPOSE OF VALLEY CENTER COMMUNITY CHURCH (VCCC)

To glorify God and make disciples through our Lord Jesus Christ

As a church we desire to be:

- God Focused - Worship
- Gospel Focused - Word
- People Focused - One Another
- World Focused - World

A 2. THE PURPOSE OF VCCC MISSIONS

We believe that the local church has the primary responsibility for sending and supporting gifted and equipped believers to make disciples by crossing barriers of distance, culture and language in order to establish and strengthen the church in places beyond the normal sphere of influence of our members, both within and outside the USA. This influence of furthering the gospel by evangelism, discipleship, church planting, theological instruction and care of missionaries, is to meet the spiritual, social and physical needs of people within the context of that ministry.

To this end, the Missions Ministry of VCCC endeavors to identify and confirm those in the church whom God has specifically gifted and is calling to the work of missions, to help equip them for life and ministry and to send them out with support, resources and encouragement for this important task of the church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-13; 3 John 5-8).

Why we do missions:

- a. It is the heart of God: From the beginning of time, God has planned for the salvation of individuals and the building of His church from every ethnicity of earth
(Gen. 12:1-3; Eph. 1:3-5; Acts 17:27-27; Ps. 67:1-2; Eph. 3:7-12).

- b. It is God's desire that people from all nations worship and glorify Him, because He alone is worthy of glory, and His people are His primary designated means to spread His glory to all peoples (Ps. 67; Isa. 66:18-19).

- c. God's Word, by example, prophecy and command, instructs His people to evangelize, disciple and care for their needs, people from all nations
(Isa. 42:1-12; 61:1-4; 66:18-20; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

- d. The love of Christ motivates and compels us to live and tell the gospel to "all people" (2 Cor. 5:14-21).

- e. God's mercy to us as sinners and believing recipients of His grace through the cross of Jesus moves us to share the gospel with those who have not heard it (Rom. 1:1-16; 1 Cor. 9:16-23; Eph. 3:7-12; Col. 1:24-29).

- f. Because faith comes only through hearing the gospel (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

A 3. THE PURPOSE OF THE MISSIONS POLICY

This statement of policy has been developed to:

- a. guide the administration of the missions program.

- b. achieve a clear sense of direction for the missions program.
- c. assist in making wise and objective decisions regarding missions.
- d. provide for consistency of vision, missions philosophy and leadership principles among the members of the Missions Committee.
- e. promote the awareness and understanding of missions within the VCCC congregation.
- f. inform missionary agencies, missionaries and prospective missionaries, of church doctrines, policies and procedures concerning its involvement in missions.

Exceptions to this policy may be made at any time by the Missions Committee with approval from the Elders.

A 4. THE TASK OF THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee has the responsibility of representing VCCC in its work of world missions (see A2) and of administering the missions program of the church in accordance with this policy.

A 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee is continually adopting, evaluating and revising specific goals for the most effective missionary outreach. Many of these goals come out of the following primary objectives:

- a. the development of a total missions program based on Biblical principles and the Statement of Faith of VCCC.
- b. regular communication to our people concerning the world's need for the gospel.

- c. the nurturing among our people of a deep personal commitment to, and significant support of, our missionaries.
- d. an on-going program of recruiting, training, sending and supporting qualified members of VCCC as missionaries.
- e. the maintenance of cooperative relationships with national associations of those involved in missions, with individual mission agencies and with local church leadership on the field.
- f. Communication, prayer and financial support of missionaries, mission organizations and agencies approved by the Missions Committee and the Elders.

SECTION B: THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

B 1. CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP SELECTION

- a. Prospective members must be a member of VCCC and an attendee for a minimum of one year, and nominated by a missions committee member.
- b. Prospective members should have demonstrated an active interest in and support of missionaries (especially those supported by VCCC).
- c. Prospective members who have had personal experience in missions, or plan to go on missions in the future, will be given priority for selection.
- d. Prospective members will have completed assigned missions training materials.

B 2. MISSIONS COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND TERM OF OFFICE

- a. Prospective Missions Committee members, after completing assigned missions training materials, are elected by the existing Missions Committee members and require approval by the Elders.
- b. The Missions Committee will consist of a minimum of eight members who will serve continuously until resignation or removal by the Elders.
- c. One of the Missions Committee members will be a Pastor or Elder assigned for oversight of the Committee and act as liaison between the Missions Committee and the Elders. This person will be chosen by the Elders and be a voting member of the Missions Committee.
- d. For purposes of voting, a quorum will be 2/3 of the total Missions Committee members.

B 3. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Missions Committee shall meet once per month. Meetings may be added, deleted or re-scheduled as deemed necessary by the Missions Committee Chairman and/or the Elder serving on the Committee. Subcommittee meetings may also be called, as necessary.

B 4. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- a. read and be familiar with the Missions Policy
- b. attend regular Missions Committee meetings and other VCCC missions related functions
- c. lead or serve on a subcommittee as necessary
- d. serve as a prayer warrior for supported missionaries
- e. educate oneself about missions through regular reading of books and periodicals, attendance at conferences and seminars and taking missions trips as practical
- f. may act as liaison, as defined in B7d, to assigned missionaries or organizations
- g. plan and participate in the VCCC missions conference
- h. whenever possible visit missionaries supported by VCCC

B 5. MISSIONS COMMITTEE OFFICERS AND MANNER OF APPOINTMENT

- a. Chairperson shall be elected by the Missions Committee on an annual basis.
- b. Subcommittee Chairperson shall be elected by the members of the subcommittee, as necessary.

B 6. SUBCOMMITTEE MINISTRIES

Subcommittees serve as implementation and administration arms of Missions Committee policy, reporting to and subject to the Missions Committee. They are chaired by a member of the Missions Committee and are chosen by the Missions Committee. Other members of subcommittees may be either members of the Missions Committee or other qualified

members of the church approved by the Missions Committee Chairman and the Missions Elder/Pastor.

B 7. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

- a. **STRATEGY:** assists the Elders in long-range planning and goal setting, monitors current missionary operations, researches new missionary opportunities, and reviews the Missions Policy.
- b. **MISSIONS CANDIDATE DEVELOPMENT:** seeks to identify and counsel those in the church whom God has specially gifted and is calling to the work of missions, assists the Elders in giving guidance concerning their education and training, assists the Elders in recommending a field of service and missions agency and helps them in obtaining financial and prayer support.
- c. **PROMOTION:** carries on the general education and stimulation of the church on the subject of missions; plans and conducts the annual Missions Conference, home meetings and other related projects designed to inform and challenge people concerning their part in the work of missions in praying, sending, supporting or going.
- d. **MISSIONARY ASSISTANCE:** assists in supplying the practical needs of missionaries, including but not limited to the sending of videos, books and other educational and encouragement items; maintains and reports correspondence from and to missionaries; communicates missionary prayer needs to the Missions Committee and congregation of the church; arranges hospitality for visiting missionaries.
- e. **FINANCE:** in conjunction with the church Elders and Pastors, plans and conducts the annual Missions Fund campaign and submits the annual Missions Budget for the Elders review and approval.

B 8. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE ELDER OR PASTOR

- a. exercise oversight of the Missions Committee
- b. provide direction, training and pastoral care for the Missions Committee
- c. serve as liaison between the Missions Committee, the Elders and the Pastoral Staff

SECTION C: THE ELDERS OF VCCC

C 1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELDERS

- a. provide oversight of the entire missions program through the Elder or Pastor assigned to the Missions Committee
- b. provide necessary overall direction and training to members of the Missions Committee
- c. assist the Missions Committee in long-range planning and goal setting
- d. provide an atmosphere within the church that promotes the world-wide proclamation of the gospel through missions work
- e. assist the Missions Committee with the annual Missions Conference
- f. select, train and approve missionary candidates from our local congregation
- g. support the missionary candidate in the selection of a field of service and a mission agency, as needed
- h. guide the missionary in obtaining financial support
- i. provide necessary visitation, counseling, mentoring, shepherding and Biblical training for the missionary in the field
- j. oversee the Missions Budget as provided by the Missions Committee and the Missions Fund

SECTION D: SELECTION OF MISSIONARIES

[NOTE: Long-term missionaries seeking support (rather than being sent) or a one time gift from VCCC will be evaluated on a case by case basis based upon pertinent criteria listed in sections D 1 - D 5.]

D 1. LONG-TERM MISSIONARY QUALIFICATIONS FOR THOSE SENT BY VCCC

To qualify for consideration for a long-term missionary support relationship with VCCC, the candidate must:

- a. be a continuous member and an attendee of the church for a minimum of one year
- b. have displayed appropriate spiritual gifts and a call to ministry through service in the church for at least one year as attested to by the Elders.
- c. have a reputation for emotional, social and spiritual maturity.
- d. have sufficient educational preparation, including Bible training and cross-cultural exposure.
- e. have a vision, ministry and doctrine that are in agreement with those of VCCC.
- f. be accepted by a qualified Mission Agency (see section D 3 and D 8), unless VCCC is functioning as the sending agency.

D 2. SHORT-TERM MISSIONARY QUALIFICATIONS

The Short-Term Missionary Program is designed to enable qualified individuals to engage in productive missions work in a cross-cultural setting, to observe the operations of seasoned missionaries on the field and to gain a world vision through personal participation in missions. Short-term missionaries are those sent out for a term of service of one year or less. To qualify for consideration for a short-term missionary support relationship the candidate must:

- a. be a continuous member and an attendee of the church for a minimum of one year.
- b. have displayed appropriate spiritual gifts and a call to ministry through service in the church for at least one year as attested to by the Elders.
- c. have a reputation for emotional, social and spiritual maturity.
- d. have a vision, ministry and doctrine that are in agreement with those of VCCC

- e. be accepted by a qualified mission agency (unless VCCC is functioning as the sending agency).

D 3. MISSION AGENCY QUALIFICATIONS

VCCC supported missionaries may serve under missions agencies that are members of Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) or the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA) and meet a and b below. They also may serve under other independent mission agencies which:

- a. have a Statement of Faith compatible with that of VCCC (see Appendix A).
- b. have objectives in keeping with VCCC's Philosophy of Missions (see Section A).
- c. exhibit financial fiscal responsibility, making available to the Missions Committee an annual independent audit of their affairs.

D 4. PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES SENT BY VCCC

Applicant for support must contact and interview with the Missions Committee liaison(s) responsible for applicants seeking long-term support. The liaison(s) will supply the applicant with a written application and a copy of VCCC Missions Policy.

- a. Individual should express interest in long-term missions to the Missions Committee.
- b. Individual will be asked to submit a written application to the Missions Committee to become a Missionary Applicant.
- c. Applicant will meet for a personal interview with the Missions Committee liaison(s) and overseeing Elder, for examination toward the goal of validating doctrinal compatibility and ability to represent VCCC's teachings on the field.
- d. Applicant will meet with the Missions Committee.
- e. Applicant will meet with the Elders.

- f. Applicant will be required to read *Let the Nations Be Glad* and complete provided questionnaire on that book. Answers will be submitted for review to liaison(s) and overseeing Elder.
- g. Applicant will meet with liaison(s) and overseeing Elder for review of his or her work.

When initial applicant work is completed and accepted by the Missions Committee, applicant can submit a written application to the Missions Committee to become a Missionary Candidate.

The Missions Committee shall prayerfully consider the applicant's request for candidacy. A majority vote of 2/3 approval for candidacy is required in order to be recommended to the Elders as a Missionary Candidate.

- h. Final approval is required by the Elders.
 - a. Should the applicant be accepted for candidacy, he or she along with the mission agency, Missions Committee, and congregation will be informed.
 - b. Should the applicant not be accepted, he or she will be invited to meet with the Elders for further counseling and recommendations and the Missions Committee will be informed.
- i. Once accepted as a candidate, candidate will be required to:
 - a. read and submit answers to *The Peacemaking Pastor*.
 - b. complete level one of *Care and Discipleship Training* by IBCD.
 - c. complete other training as assigned.

When above work is completed and accepted, candidate will be approved by the Elders and presented for commissioning to the congregation for their mission work.

D 5. PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING SHORT-TERM MISSIONARIES FOR SUPPORT

Those seeking support should contact and meet with the Missions Committee liaison(s) responsible for short-term mission support before establishing his or her mission's trip. The liaison(s) will supply the candidate with a written application and a copy of VCCC Missions Policy.

- a. Candidate will submit a satisfactory written application to the Missions Committee.

- b. Candidate will meet for a personal interview with the Missions Committee liaison(s) for short-term missionary applications.
- c. Candidate will meet for a personal interview with the Missions Committee.

Following the personal interview with the applicant, the Missions Committee shall prayerfully consider the request for support. A majority vote of 2/3 approval for support is required in order to recommend to the Elders that the applicant be approved for support and recommended amount. Final approval is required by the Elders.

- d. Should the applicant be accepted for support, he or she will be notified and commissioned.
- e. Should the applicant not be accepted, he or she will be invited to meet with the Elders for further counseling and recommendations.
- f. Upon completion of missions trip, short-term missionaries should report to the Missions Committee.

D 6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES TO THE CHURCH

- a. Report on their ministry's progress and needs regularly to the Missions Committee assigned liaison and assigned Elder (if a missionary sent by VCCC) through a newsletter, email, blog or similar means. Long-term missionaries must report at least quarterly, preferably monthly, and on completion of mission assignment.
- b. Complete in a timely fashion, any evaluation reports requested by the Missions Committee. Evaluation reports are usually requested annually, but may be asked for at the Committee's discretion.
- c. Respond appropriately to correspondence from the Missions Committee members and other church leaders.
- d. Cooperate with the Missions Committee in arranging visits to the field by the Pastoral Staff, Missions Committee members, other church leaders or members of the congregation.
- e. Give prompt notice to the Missions Committee concerning significant changes in location, ministry or relationship with the Mission Agency.
- f. Whenever it is logistically and financially feasible, the missionaries are encouraged and expected to visit VCCC during their vacations/furloughs. In this way they can share with the congregation their ministry goals and experiences.

- g. Additional requirements by overseeing Elder.

D 7. RESPONSIBILITY OF VCCC TO ITS LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES

- a. Prayer support--We will continually work at encouraging our people to pray for our missionaries.
- b. Financial Support--We will pay on a regular basis what we promise to a missionary unit for the length of his/her term. At the end of that time an evaluation will be made by both parties to see if we want to continue in this relationship. If there is a change in ministry and/or location, a prompt evaluation will be made by the Missions Committee along with a recommendation to the Elders if we want to continue to support this ministry. In the event that the overall fiscal situation of the church dictates that regular payment of financial support must be altered, the Elders will communicate that information in a prompt and timely manner to the missionaries. Any change to missionaries' financial support will be communicated by the Elders to the missionaries.
- c. Consistent Communication--We will attempt to keep our missionaries up to date on what is happening at VCCC.
- d. Practical Assistance--If a missionary needs housing, transportation, furniture, etc., while he/she is in our area, or other kinds of need while on the field, we will attempt to meet those needs through the Missions Committee.
- e. Team Relationship--We want to be viewed as part of the team behind our missionaries. They can expect us to have a concern for them and for their ministry. We desire an openness on both our parts. We want to continually develop the attitude of a team ministry that results in a closer relationship.
- f. The Missions Committee is responsible for hosting the missionaries, and their families, during visits to VCCC. The Missions Committee member who has been assigned as liaison for that missionary will function as the lead for hosting.
- g. Report to Missions Committee--Our missionaries can expect to meet with the Committee whenever they are on home ministry assignment.
- h. Report to Church--We, in conjunction with the Missions Committee, will assist returning missionaries in lining up speaking engagements in the church to share about their ministry.
- i. Elder Oversight--Each missionary will be assigned an overseeing Elder. This Elder will be responsible for shepherding, encouraging, and ministering pastorally to the missionaries while on the field and at home.

D 8. VCCC'S RELATIONSHIP TO MISSION AGENCIES

- a. The relationship between VCCC and mission agencies is basically one of mutual cooperation, responsibility, and purpose. The mobilization of resource personnel and finances, and the matching of them with effective ministries require synchronized efforts by both the church and the agency.
- b. The mission agencies are accountable to the local church regarding the utilization of resource personnel and finances that emanate from the local church. They are also accountable for assuring that VCCC missionaries receive the best possible guidance for the proper use of their gifts, experience, personalities, and training.
- c. VCCC is accountable to the agency to prepare and equip candidates to the best degree possible, including the areas of Christian life, personal relationships, basic Bible training, and ministry experience.
- d. When a VCCC member becomes involved with an agency, the church has a serious responsibility to work in cooperation with that agency to assure the best possible preparation and placement for the candidate.
- e. Every missionary should have responsible oversight while on the field. In the case of VCCC members, the church is responsible to provide that oversight or to see that it is adequately provided. Realizing that the local church is not in the best position to administer on site oversight, counsel, personal care, discipleship, encouragement and evaluation, these responsibilities will normally be entrusted to the agency. Another aspect of responsible oversight is commitment. VCCC is committed to every one of its missionaries and has a keen sense of responsibility toward them. This includes attempting to do our share in seeing to it that all their needs are met: physical, emotional, spiritual, and ministry needs. Even though the church cannot provide adequate oversight on the field, VCCC wants to stay abreast of the lives and ministry of the missionary family.

- f. Each missionary shall operate under an approved agency. If a missionary changes agencies, he/she must gain prior approval from the church. Advance notification must be given to allow VCCC to evaluate the agency and the specific ministry involvement. If this is not done, support may be terminated.

Based on the above, the following are criteria for the evaluation of agencies through which missionaries or projects are supported by VCCC:

- g. The Missions Committee is convinced that missionaries are more effective in ministry and more adequately cared for when working under an established sending agency; therefore, it is our policy not to support missionaries who are independent of such sponsorship and direction.
- h. The mission agency must be a Christian agency whose overall goals and doctrinal statement should be consistent with VCCC's.
- i. The agency should be a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). If it is not a member, approval will be based on evaluation of the agency by the VCCC Missions Committee and unanimous recommendation by the Committee.
- j. The agency should have a clear policy toward the national church of the countries in which its missionaries are sent, which provides for development of national leadership and missionary sending from the national church.
- k. The agency should provide responsible oversight for its missionaries. Such oversight includes care for spiritual, physical, and emotional needs, guidance in goal-setting, and administrative oversight for the work on the field.
- l. The agency should demonstrate cooperation with other like-minded agencies at the administrative and ministry level.

SECTION E: SUPPORT OF THE MISSIONS PROGRAM

E 1. SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR THE MISSIONS PROGRAM

VCCC shall raise missionary funds through annual faith giving promises to the Mission Fund. Monies from the General Fund may be used in support of missionaries and mission organizations which were supported prior to implementation of this policy.

Support raising by all approved missionaries (both short- and long-term), or mission agencies, is restricted to the Missions Committee, the individual's family and friends, and his or her own financial resources. Solicitation for support may not be made to the general congregation of VCCC without special approval by the Elders.

E 2. MISSIONS BUDGET

The Missions Budget and the Missions Fund shall be overseen by the Elders, with the input and cooperation of the Missions Committee.

E 3. INITIATION, ADJUSTMENTS AND TERMINATION OF MISSIONARY SUPPORT

Support for a long-term missionary shall begin on a date selected by the Missions Committee, and support for a short-term missionary shall begin on the date the missionary leaves for the field or an earlier date, if required by the supporting mission agency.

Adjustments to missionary support can happen on an annual basis.

Support shall be terminated when the missionary no longer meets the qualifications set forth in this policy, persistently fails to meet the responsibilities set forth in this policy, or the sponsoring mission agency no longer meets the qualifications set forth in this policy. A notification period of at least one month shall be given before termination of support.

E 4. INSURANCE, EDUCATION AND RETIREMENT COSTS

It is expected that expenses for health and life insurance, education of children and provision for retirement are included by the mission agency in determining the missionary's support needs and, therefore, are not considered separate.

APPENDIX A: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The VCCC Statement of Faith articulates the doctrine we believe as a church. These beliefs are foundational to our church, and are a summary of what the Bible proclaims about the central matters of our faith. Read this section carefully. If you have any further questions, look up the Scripture references on which the Statement of Faith is based. Those who seek to make VCCC their church home affirm their agreement and alignment with these 13 points of our doctrinal statement.

While our doctrine can be accurately referred to as “Reformed” theology in our view of God, human nature, sin, and salvation, we don’t really care about labels at VCCC. Our greatest desire is to teach what the Bible says and apply it to lives. The 13 statements below summarize biblical doctrine, which is gospel-centered doctrine. We believe the Bible is centered on the message of the Gospel and we want our doctrine and our life as a church to be centered on and continually shaped by this same Gospel.

1. THE TRIUNE GOD

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

Summary:

God eternally exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we are created to worship the one true God.

2. REVELATION

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

Summary:

God has revealed himself through creation, through Jesus, and through the Scriptures. We are called to submit to, study, and joyfully obey the authoritative Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 | 2 Peter 1:20-21 | John 8:31-32

3. CREATION OF HUMANITY

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own

image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women. Marriage is therefore a covenant only between a man and a woman that ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

Summary:

God created men and women in his image. We are created, dependent beings, and recognize that men and women are created to complement one another by assuming distinct roles in the family and church.

Genesis 1:27-31 | Genesis 2:18-25 | Ephesians 5:22-33 | 1 Corinthians 11:3 | Romans 16:1-4 | 1 Timothy 2:8-15

4. THE FALL

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan's temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally,

volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God’s own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

Summary:

We are sinners by nature and by choice. The just penalty for our sins is death; apart from God's gracious intervention, we are under the wrath of God.

Genesis 3:1-7 | Romans 5:12,19 | Romans 3:10-12

5. THE PLAN OF GOD

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

Summary:

God does the work of choosing and saving those who put their faith in Jesus. We are called to repent and believe.

Ephesians 1:3-10 | Revelation 5:9-10 | Romans 8:29-30 | Acts 17:30-31

6. THE GOSPEL

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s very

wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central (the message is Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised”). This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

Summary:

The gospel is the good news of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Both Christians and non-Christians need the gospel.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 | 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 | 1 John 1:1-4 | Romans 10:9-13

7. THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over

it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human being can ever boast before him—Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

Summary:

Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Scriptures, fully God and fully man, who has accomplished redemption for sinners. Jesus is the only way to salvation.

John 1:14 | Matthew 1:18 | 2 Corinthians 5:21 | 1 Timothy 2:5 | Matthew 28:18 | Romans 3:21-27 | John 14:1-3 | 1 Corinthians 1:20-31

8. THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

We believe that Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on our behalf. By his perfect obedience he satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. Inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience flows from this free justification.

Summary:

Jesus' sinless life and atoning is credited to all who trust in him as full payment for their sins, putting them in right standing with God. We are motivated towards obedience because of the gift of justification.

9. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as the “other” Paraclete, is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, baptizing them into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit’s agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God’s family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

Summary:

The Holy Spirit is actively working before, during, and after salvation. He lives within all followers of Jesus and powerfully guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 | Ephesians 1:13-14 | John 14:16-17 | John 14:26 | John 15:26 | John 16:8-14 | Romans 8:9 | 1 Corinthians 3:16 | 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

10. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify,

trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

Summary:

The Kingdom of God is the exercise of God's sovereignty in all of creation, and will be fully realized in the new heaven and new earth. We take part in advancing the Kingdom of God by living as salt and light in our city.

Mark 1:14-15 | Matthew 5:13-16 | Matthew 22:36-40 | Galatians 6:10 |
Colossians 1:15- 19 | Revelation 21:1-5

11. GOD'S NEW PEOPLE

We believe that God's new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate

dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

Summary:

God continues his work on earth through the church. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world.

Ephesians 1:16-23 | Ephesians 5:25 | Matthew 28:18-20 | John 13:34 |
Ephesians 2:14-16, 19-22

12. BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that baptism is the initiation ordinance for Christians. Believers are baptized in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to beautifully show our death to sin and resurrection to new life through our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. As such, we believe it is most clearly portrayed by immersion. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the regular gathering of believers in Jesus to commemorate the dying love of Christ by eating the bread and drinking the cup. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are both ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with the entrance of believers into the new covenant community, and the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they serve as God's pledge to us and a means of his sanctifying grace, as well as our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ and our anticipation of his return and the consummation of all things.

Summary:

*Baptism and the Lord's Supper are commanded in Scripture for believers as a sign of initiation and covenant renewal for followers of Jesus Christ. We practice "believer's baptism" by full submersion.**

***NOTE:** At VCCC, we practice "believer's baptism," believing that baptism is appropriately administered only to those who give a thoughtful profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, we believe that baptism should come after faith in Jesus, rather than before. For this reason, we do not baptize infants or small children that are unable to make a thoughtful profession of faith. We understand that some within our church family may have different convictions about baptism. Therefore, we will not necessarily exclude from membership those who do not agree with our position on baptism—who were baptized as infants and decline to be baptized as believers, though we do expect that they have a theologically defensible reason for holding to infant baptism and that they will not allow this non-essential issue to cause division in the church.

Matthew 28:18-20 | Romans 6:3-5 | Matthew 26:26-28 | 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

13. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

Summary:

God will physically resurrect all people at the return of Jesus Christ for either an eternity in hell or an eternity in the new heaven and new earth. God will renew creation and his people will joyfully live forever in the new heaven and new earth.

Revelation 19:11-16 | 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 | Revelation 21:1-5

(Adapted from the confession statement of the Gospel Coalition, January 2010)