

The Creekstone Inquirer's Weekend

Friday and Saturday, April 23-24, 2010

"Let's take chances, make mistakes, and get messy."

- Creekstone's unofficial motto

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

- Realizing a dream— *to plant a distinctively gospel-driven church*
- Our partners and connections
- Our goal for the weekend: information —> participation

SESSION #1— Creekstone's Mission, Message and Core Commitments

- Creekstone's Mission: *"To glorify God by helping people come alive to the wonder of the gospel... so that we are set free to live all of life in light of God's amazing grace."*
- Creekstone's Message: *the Gospel*
 - Two sides: bad news & good news
 - An illustration: *the A+ for the F*
 - How we change —> John 15:4-5
- Embracing the Core Commitments: *grace, community, and mission*
 - Pervasive Grace
 - Authentic Community
 - Organic Mission

SESSION #2– Creekstone’s Philosophy of Ministry

- An illustration: if the church were a business
 - Owner
 - Manager
 - Employees
 - Customers

- Implications– Ephesians 4
 - The traditional model vs. the biblical model of church ministry
 - Every member ministry
 - The role of the lead pastor/teaching pastor and the harpooner in Moby Dick

- Other considerations
 - The organized (programmed/the lattice) vs. the organic (personal/the vegetation)
 - Intentional discipleship (adults, youth & children)
 - Worship style:
 - Tied to history, but understandable in/contextualized for the present
 - Combines theological depth and emotional expression
 - Confessional and devotional
 - Word and Spirit
 - Perspective on politics
 - Conservative, liberal, or *radical*
 - Ecclesiology– church government
 - Three kinds: Episcopal, Congregational, Representative/Presbyterian
 - Expressions: locally, regionally and nationally
 - Our present ministry structure (*subject to change*)

Session #3– Creekstone’s Theological Orientation

- Historic, Reformation Theology (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_solas)
 - *Sola Scriptura*

 - *Sola Fide*

 - *Sola Gratia*

 - *Solo Christo / Solus Christus*

 - *Soli Deo Gloria*

- View of culture and vocation: run away, attack, or renew

- Recommended resources (coming soon to the website)

Session #4– Creekstone’s Membership Process

- Reasons for “membership”: dating vs. marriage (commitment, conflict, accountability, practical love, etc.)
- Our four essential membership affirmations
 - An affirmation of faith in Jesus as Savior
 - An affirmation of the Lordship of Jesus
 - An affirmation to peace and for accountability
 - An affirmation to support and participate in the life of the church
- Our five basic membership commitments
 - Attend worship (unless providentially hindered)
 - Pursue community through participation in a discipleship group, Bible study, etc.
 - Serve as an MTV– *Ministry Team Volunteer*
 - Invite people in your sphere of influence
 - Give generously
- Sign the Membership Covenant and the Peacemaker Pledge
- Two kinds of adult membership: “member” and “associate member”
- The Process
 - Complete a membership application (download all docs online/website)
 - Send application to McKay Caston (mckaycaston@mac.com)
 - Meet with a member of the pastoral team to review the application
 - Receive baptism (if not already baptized)
 - Be formally recognized in a special communion service
- What about children’s membership?
 - May join as early as age 8 as a non-voting member through a process of parent mentoring
 - Eligible for adult/voting membership at age 13
 - If joining as a child member, he/she must participate in the adult Inquirer’s Weekend and re-affirm faith (re-affirmation of baptism) by age 16, or be removed from membership

Session #5- Question & Answer (anything goes!)

CREEKSTONE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having affirmed the four questions of membership, and being in agreement with Creekstone's mission, core commitments and philosophy of ministry, I desire to become an official member of this local church, placing myself under its spiritual oversight. In doing do, I make the following six commitments:

- To attend weekly worship (unless providentially hindered)
- To pursue community in the context of smaller gatherings
- To serve on the Ministry Team in various capacities
- To invite and bring people in my sphere of influence
- To promote peace and unity in the body by refusing to spread a bad report and by committing to biblical conflict resolution (according to the Scriptural guidelines laid out by Peacemaker Ministries– see below)
- To give generously for the local and global advance of the gospel

I understand that the above commitments cannot be maintained without the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit at work in my life. Therefore, my ultimate pursuit is to fight for gospel faith, believing (1) who I once was, and who I now am, (2) what I deserved, and what I have received, and (3) through I be more sinful than I can fully admit, I am more loved, forgiven and accepted than I can dare to dream.

Signature

Date

THE PEACEMAKER'S PLEDGE

A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict.¹ We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ.² Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:

Glorify God — Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring him praise by depending on his forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love, as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.³

Get the Log out of Your Eye — Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in God's mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused.⁴

Gently Restore — Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When a conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner.⁵

Go and be reconciled — Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation—forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences.⁶

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an assignment, not an accident. We will remember that success in God's eyes is not a matter of specific results, but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that our service as peacemakers will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to know His infinite love.⁷

1 Matt. 5:9; Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26.

2 Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; James 1:2-4.

3 Ps. 37:1-6; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; James 3:17-18; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 2:12.

4 Prov. 28:13; Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 19:8; Col. 3:5-14; 1 John 1:8-9.

5 Prov. 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; James 5:9.

6 Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12; 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Phil. 2:3-4.

7 Matt. 25:14-21; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:18; 1 Peter 2:19; 4:19.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Creekstone Church • Membership Application

If applying electronically, please send completed application to mckaycaston@mac.com

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Marital Status: Single Married Widowed Divorced Separated

Anniversary Date: _____ Birthday: _____

Employer/Vocation: _____

How did you hear about Creekstone? _____

Children: *(list more children on the back)*

Name	Gender	Birthday	Grade	Living at home?
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

I would like to join Creekstone:

By profession of faith By reaffirmation of faith By transfer from another church

Child member to adult member As an associate member

If joining by transfer, please provide the following information:

Church Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

I was baptized (when) _____ (where) _____

I need to be baptized

I would like my infant(s)/young child(ren) baptized

Please indicate your response to the following questions:

1. I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except for His sovereign mercy.

yes no need more explanation/information

2. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and receive and rest upon Him alone for my salvation through faith as He is offered in the gospel.

yes no need more explanation/information

3. I resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that I will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Jesus.

yes no need more explanation/information

4. I promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability.

yes no need more explanation/information

5. I submit myself to the governing oversight and shepherding discipline of the Church, and promise to promote its purity and peace?

yes no need more explanation/information

Please write a brief account of your spiritual experience/personal testimony. This is simply a personalization of what it means to recognize yourself as a sinner who has been saved by grace alone through faith alone.

Please send completed application to mckaycaston@mac.com

More Information

MCKAY'S STORY

Originally from Memphis, TN, I completed my high school education in Jackson, MS, before receiving a B.A. in History and Literature at the University of Mississippi, and eventually graduating with both masters and doctorate degrees from Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. With almost fifteen years of experience in ordained, pastoral ministry, I have served on several church staffs and as a lead pastor before joining Perimeter Church in the summer of 2007 as a Church Planter in Residence. My wife, Kristy, is from just outside of Yazoo City, Mississippi, and is a licensed (but non-practicing) pharmacist. With interests ranging from home-making, to philosophy, to classical education, to interior design, she enjoys teaching and deeply values time with friends.

Kristy and I were married in June of 1992, and since, have added three children to our family, Ann Ferris (13), Schaeffer (11), and Sarah Wynn (5). They are totally on board with being a “missionary family,” understanding that God uses our brokenness, weakness and need as the channel through which he communicates his grace through us to others. This has not always been the case. For much of our lives, Kristy and I misinterpreted the gospel to be a form of moralism whereby God would accept and bless us based on our goodness (or at least if we were better than others). We lived like the Jews in Romans 10:3, “Being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, [we] did not submit to God’s righteousness.” By God’s grace, we are growing in our understanding of the substitutionary nature of the cross, of the imputation of Jesus’ righteousness, and of what it means to be dearly loved, adopted children of God. These doctrines have become very precious to us, and now serve as the centerpiece of our life and ministry.

Summary

- Bachelors in History and Literature from the University of Mississippi
- Masters and doctorate degrees from Covenant Theological Seminary
- Fifteen years of experience as a staff pastor and senior pastor
- Equipped as a church planter by Perimeter Church and the North Georgia Church Planting Network
- Married for 18 years to wife, Kristy, with three very cool children, ages 13, 11 and 5.

Life Verses

2 Corinthians 12:9 & Acts 20:24, But [Jesus] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me... I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." ~ Paul the Apostle

THE NAME “CREEKSTONE”

The Bible records in 1 Samuel 17 that an Israelite boy named David represented his people in battle against a huge, seemingly undefeatable enemy. The future of the nation was in David's hands, or more literally, in his sling. As he went out to fight the Philistine warrior, David picked up five stones from a creek as his weapon of choice. It was with a creekstone that David felled the adversary, Goliath. As a result, David became the savior and hero of his people. However, David was merely a shadow of a greater, and ultimate hero, who also would represent his people before an even more powerful enemy, sin and death. This hero's weapon was not a stone. It was a cross. And by the substitutionary death of Jesus, he has set his people free and has become the Savior-Hero of the church. And so we have named our worshipping community Creekstone, to remind us of the present and eternal victory that is ours through the cross of our greater David, Jesus—the *hero who is our hope*.

CREEKSTONE'S GRACE-DEPENDENT REASON FOR BEING

Creekstone's reason for being, or mission, is simple and focused: *Creekstone Church exists to glorify God by helping people come alive to the wonder of the gospel.* Our mission is focused on the gospel because it is the grace of God that is the power that reconciles people to God and motivates and empowers the entire Christian life. We agree with Tim Keller, who says, "The gospel is not just the 'A-B-C' but the 'A to Z' of the Christian life... The key to continual and deeper spiritual renewal and revival is the continual re-discovery of the the gospel." As a result, spiritual life and continued vitality hinges on the Spirit of God bringing a conscious wonder of His grace alive in our hearts through faith. We want to be facilitators in that process. Therefore, helping people come alive to the wonder of the gospel is at the very heart of our vision to glorify God.

CREEKSTONE'S CORE COMMITMENTS

#1- Pervasive Grace

We want the radical message of grace to be the central theme that permeates everything about the church, from teaching, to worship, to prayer, to life-on-life discipleship, to vocation, to marriage, to parenting, to education, to leadership, to stewardship, to mission, etc.

In order to see this become reality, we *continually* must distinguish the gospel from religion. Religion says that if I obey and sacrifice, then I will be accepted and blessed. But the gospel tells me that I am accepted and blessed because of the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus. These are two utterly different things. Since the radical grace of the gospel is counterintuitive to the moralistic, religious mind, we must hear the gospel in depth and believe it in depth over and over again.

As a grace-centered church that prizes, pursues and teaches sound, impassioned, reformed orthodoxy, we will emphasize that theological knowledge is not the end, but is a means for knowing God and growing in intimacy with him.

#2- Authentic Community

As an implication of the gospel, we want to cultivate the kind of community that is defined by authenticity and vulnerability. We long for a grace-saturated atmosphere that communicates to people, "This is a safe place to be real. We are all broken, sinful people who desperately need Jesus."

On this note, we will acknowledge that human weakness is not a liability, but a reality that drives us to dependent prayer and to derive supernatural strength and ability from God. In the words of Jack Miller, "Grace runs downhill."

We believe that true humility is beautiful, and may be the most compelling virtue that attracts nonChristians to the gospel. Consequently, we really want to live as if the ground is level at the foot of the cross.

As we focus on community as a core value, we will emphasize the importance of intentional, life-on-life discipleship, and that the church is not primarily a place, but a people.

Furthermore, as a community, we will affirm that every believer has been endowed with spiritual gifts that he or she is to exercise so that the the body will be healthy and effective in fulfilling its purpose in the world. In this sense, every member is a minister. Leaders are not called to do all the ministry, but to equip the believers to exercise their unique gifts.

Concerning leadership, we desire and value leaders who are pacesetters in living the grace implications of the gospel, particularly manifesting qualities such as genuine humility, sincere repentance, cheerful generosity and dependent prayer.

In John 17 Jesus prays that the church would manifest unity as an apologetic that the gospel is true. We trust that we will have a diversity of people attending worship and participating in the community. It will be our bond in the gospel that serves as an ever present reminder of our essential unity, even amidst our diversity.

#3- Organic Mission

We will encourage all the folks in the church to see themselves as missionaries, word and deed ambassadors of the gospel.

With that missional mindset, we will emphasize what it means to be “salt and light” in the context of our organic, relational spheres of influence. As Marva Dawn says, “Being Church means following a way of life... Evangelism happens as we go about our daily lives—to work, to the grocery store, to school, to the neighbor’s house for tea—we live the gospel. We speak it freely... We incarnate it. We display a joy in following Jesus and his Way that invites our neighbors to consider the truth of his life in us.”

But mission is never merely a personal endeavor. And so as we gather for worship, we desire for the service to be accessible to non-Christians. In fact, whoever preaches or teaches will assume there are non-Christians in attendance, and will speak in a way that addresses their questions, fears, and doubts in language that they can understand.

As part of this commitment, we will encourage non-Christians to “belong before they believe,” letting them know that they don’t have to change their belief systems or lifestyles to participate in the community as they investigate the claims of the gospel. This is because we recognize that coming to faith is often a process, as is growing in grace as a disciple of Jesus.

Therefore, we will not view non-Christians as enemies, but precisely as the people to whom we are called to serve, love and offer the living hope of God’s transforming grace.

PARTNERSHIP AND APPRECIATION

Creekstone is grateful for our partnership with our sponsoring church, Perimeter Church, in John's Creek/Atlanta, which has a renowned track record of starting vital, gospel-centered churches, and with Campus Outreach, a college ministry that serves students at North Georgia College & State University. We also are part of the North Georgia Church Planting Network, the Metro Atlanta Presbytery of the PCA, and enjoy a special friendship and enjoy a special friendship (and likely association) with the Acts 29 Network. We also have a deep appreciation for Sovereign Grace Ministries.

“IMAGINE”

At Creekstone, we are imagining and dreaming that, *by grace alone*, we will become people who...

1. GLORIFY God by tying and tethering everything about its ministry to the life-revolutionizing power of God's grace in Jesus.
2. EMBRACE both the authoritative truth of the written Word and the active ministry of the Holy Spirit, where sound doctrine and vital experience converge to form a mighty river of true spirituality.
3. PROMOTE an impassioned orthodoxy, which is manifested corporately in the context of holistic, God-centered worship that is characterized by the fullness of religious affections: awe and intimacy, reverence and celebration, sorrow and joy, humility and boldness, etc.
4. VALUE authenticity, humility, community, mission, mercy, compassion, repentance, creativity, faith, love, generosity, teamwork, testimony, beauty, truth, grace, etc.
5. ENJOY a sense of unpretentious, genuine community that is characterized by spiritual and relational vulnerability.
6. ATTRACT spiritually thirsty people who are looking for an oasis of grace; a place where sinners can come as they are to drink from the spring of living water as they rest in the shade of the cross.
7. PURSUE the next generation with practical, incarnational, grace-centered ministry.
8. APPROACH post-modernity not only as a challenge to the Gospel, but also as an opportunity for the Gospel.
9. CELEBRATE its place in the drama of God's redemptive story by appreciating the traditions of the past, incarnating the Gospel in the present and adapting ministry in the future.
10. ENGAGE the culture with thoughtfulness and respect as it seeks not only to defend, but also to commend the faith to those who do not yet believe.
11. LEAD people into a genuine faith-love relationship with Jesus by discipling each member in a depth-understanding of the Gospel and its life implications.
12. EQUIP members to serve as missionaries in their natural, organic social networks.
13. RELEASE every member into his or her area of ministry passion and giftedness.
14. SERVE its community through deeds and ministries of mercy and compassion.
15. FACILITATE unity and cooperation among a network of like-minded, Gospel-centered churches because it longs for an effective community-wide church rather than merely an effective individual congregation.
16. RECOGNIZE the spiritual dynamics behind material realities, and consequently bathes all of life and ministry in God-centered, kingdom-advancing prayer.
17. MENTOR leaders with an intentional plan to develop them into mature and equipped pacesetters who have the gospel as their True North for life and ministry.
18. MULTIPLY the mission through an aggressive approach to church planting and renewal, promoting God-centered, Spirit-filled, grace-driven, faith-motivated, joy-saturated missional communities in the entire region and ultimately, the world.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church Website- <http://creekstonechurch.com>

McKay's Blog- <http://mckaycaston.com>

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[facebook.com/mckaycaston](https://www.facebook.com/mckaycaston)

twitter.com/mckaycaston (@mckaycaston)