

**Note:** The statements below are framed in the language of love as we love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut. 6:4; Lk. 10:27). Love is the language of the covenants, old and new, that God made with His people. They are the expression of God's redeeming love and grace reaching out to His greatest creation, humanity. The love of God is not weak or sentimental; rather it is strong, faithful, committed, self-giving, sacrificial, holy, unconditional and unlimited. Yet His love calls for a love in return as 1 John 4:19 rightly expresses '*we love because God first loved us.*' Our love gets expressed in trust, obedience, and a passionate commitment to know Him and follow His mission to touch people with the redemptive message and love of Jesus Christ.

**A. THE WORD OF GOD: God wrote the book so that makes it inspired and authoritative. The Bible is also the most trustworthy, historical and reliable book there is.**

We LOVE God's Word in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, inspired by God's Spirit, spoken and written through human authors (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Therefore, we submit to it as supremely and uniquely authoritative, governing our belief and our behavior. We also commit ourselves to demonstrate our love for God's Word by believing and obeying it (Jas. 1:22). We will live out the Word, by God's grace, because the Word is Jesus and all people need to continually experience and encounter Jesus, the Living Word (Jn. 1:1,14).

Some Practical Applications:

- We pursue knowing God through allowing the Bible to read us as we read it; to hear the questions the Bible is asking as we seek to answer our questions as well. We do this, privately and publicly, to understand its message for us today.
- We expect messages and group discussion at FBC to be grounded in the Bible
- We do not accept doctrines, no matter what is claimed as their source, if they do not align with what the Bible says; supposed 'modern prophets', 'new revelation', or any message – even if apparently given miraculously – must be tested by the Bible.
- We aim to significantly reduce Bible ignorance in the Church as the Bible will remain indispensable to growing up believers into the likeness of Christ.
- We involve ourselves with Bible translation ministries to accelerate the availability of the Bible for every people group.

**B. THE TRINITY: God is one and He is also three – the divine mystery that we are invited to enter, experience and enjoy!**

We LOVE the Trinity through which God reveals Himself as the one, eternal, living God who governs all things according to His sovereign will and for His saving purpose (Gen 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 1:17). In the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God alone is Creator, Ruler, Judge, and Savior of the world (Isa. 40:28; Ps. 96:13; 1 Tim. 6:15; Jn. 4:42). We love how the Trinity freely created the world out of nothing. The universe is the good creation of the one living God and reveals God's existence, power and glory. Therefore, we commit ourselves to love the Trinity with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. We must share God's greatest priority, which is that His character be exalted above all things.

#### Some Practical Applications:

- We affirm that knowing and experiencing the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is our highest priority. To substitute any activity, relationship, or passion to become more important is idolatry.
- We want to be actively engaged in seeing our one true living God be glorified through all ethnic people groups. This is our primary motive for missions.
- We pursue the reflection of the community of the Trinity, albeit imperfectly, in our small groups so we can be a faithful witness to the community within and outside of FBC by walking in love, humility, integrity, mutual submission, and sacrificial living.
- We know that Trinity is the author of all good things and what is meant for evil the Godhead turns into good and beautiful.

### **C. GOD THE FATHER - The perfect reflection of what a Father should be and how He wants a personal, all satisfying relationship with you that no earthly parent can ever provide.**

We LOVE God the Father of His people. The Old Testament knew God as Father, as the one who brought them into existence, protected and disciplined them, called for their obedience, longed for their love, and exercised compassionate forgiveness, and enduring love for them (Deut. 1:31, 8:5, 32:6; Isa. 1:2; 63:16, 64:8; Jer. 3:19; Ps. 103:13). All these revelations of God as Father remain true for us today as God's people. Moreover, Jesus taught us to pray '*Our Father*' (Matt. 6:9). Therefore, we commit ourselves to receive and respond to His love, to live in obedience under His loving discipline, to reflect His character in all that we do, and to trust in His provision and goodness in whatever circumstances He leads or allows us to experience.

#### Some Practical Applications:

- We are thankful that we can rest in the loving care of our perfect Father in Heaven.
- We encourage Christians who have had bad and hurtful experiences with their earthly father to understand there is a Father in heaven who wants to heal and redeem their wounds and to show what a perfect Father really looks like.
- We understand that in Jesus' most famous talk, the Sermon on the Mount, He repeatedly points to our heavenly Father as the focus of our action. We are to be peacemakers, as sons or daughters of God. We are to do good deeds, so that our

Father receives praise. We are to love our enemies in reflection to God's Fatherly love. We are to forgive others as our Father forgave us. We are not to worry but rather trust in our Father's good provision. This the will of the Father within His Kingdom that we are called to be and do.

#### **D. GOD THE SON: God came down in human flesh to reflect and show how great, loving, and good the Father is.**

We LOVE God the Son because He became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (Jn. 1:12-14; Lk. 1:35). We are grateful that the Bible tells us that Jesus performs the same sovereign actions as God the Father. Christ is Creator of the universe, Ruler of history, Judge of all nations, and Savior of all who turn to God (Jn. 1:3, 4:42; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:15-18; Eph. 1:20-23; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12). We love how Jesus has ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of representative, intercessor, and advocate on our behalf (Heb. 7:25, 9:24; Rom. 8:34; 1 Jn. 2:1-2). We love that Jesus loved us with a self-giving love so that we might have life in and through Him (Jn. 10:10, 15:1-8). We love how Jesus will return in all of His glory when all people groups have heard His good news (Matt 24:14, 25:31; Jn. 17:5). Therefore, we commit ourselves to love Jesus, His message, His mission and His return to allow Him to live in and through us for the sake of His glory.

##### Some Practical Applications:

- We hold on loosely to the things of this temporary world because we know this is not our home but there is a permanent home, heaven, which awaits all those who long for Him.
- We are thankful that we have nothing to hide, nothing to prove, and nothing to fear because in Jesus we are totally accepted, completely forgiven, and unconditionally loved.
- We embrace Jesus' call to discipleship to follow Him on His terms and to multiply the growing faith that is at work within us to others.

#### **E. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT: God is always present to encourage, equip and empower us to serve Him by serving others**

We LOVE the Holy Spirit within the unity of God the Father and God the Son. He is the missionary Spirit sent by the missionary Father and Son, breathing life and power into God's missionary Church (Acts 1:8). He is the One who gives us this unbreakable union and promise with Christ (Rom 8:9-16; Eph. 1:13-14). Therefore, we commit ourselves to love the presence and work of the Holy Spirit by allowing the Spirit to influence our witness, teaching, guidance, power, and mission (Eph. 5:18). We recognize that we cannot do these things through our human effort. Without His fruit (Gal. 5:22-23) and spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:7-12; 1 Cor. 4-11), our

lives cannot reflect the beauty of the good news of God. Without His understanding, we cannot apply the truths of God's Word to our lives and to the life of Jesus' Church (1 Cor. 2:9-12).

#### Some Practical Applications:

- We are thankful that the Spirit takes us full residence in our lives which allows us to listen for His promptings and rely on His strength to respond to them wherever they may lead us.
- We declare our dependence on the Spirit to reveal, guide, and sustain us in the significant role that God has given to us to declare His glory through the mission to make disciples of all people groups.
- We urge Christians to discover their spiritual gift(s) that the Spirit gives and use them to serve others.

### **F. HUMANITY: God's greatest creation decided to live life their way but some have realized that life, the good life, is only found in Jesus Christ.**

We LOVE that humanity is the special creation of God, made in His own image (Gen. 1:26-28). Yet we do not love how sin has caused such great misery to all the people, systems, and structures of this world. We are all sinners and we do not love this. We do not love how the sinful (i.e., selfish) nature leads people to rebel against God, reject His authority, and disobey His Word (Rom. 3:22-23, 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3, 12). In this sinful state, people are separated from God, and their destiny will be a Christless eternity unless they are reconciled to Him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:21-22, 2:12; Rom. 5:10). This also means we are unable to do and be what God wants us to do and be until this reconciliation takes place (2 Cor. 5:17-20). Therefore, we commit ourselves to never rest until His whole Gospel is proclaimed throughout the world.

#### Some Practical Applications:

- We view every person as an ever living, never dying soul since we all bear the image of God in them. This causes us to treat all with respect even as we communicate the great story of God and call forth their response. Our evangelism should be marked with gentleness, respect as 1 Peter 3:15-16 instructs us. We therefore reject any form of witness that is forceful, disrespectful, and deceptive.
- We understand that there are 'no second chances' to follow Jesus after we die so we commit ourselves to pray for the lost, the not yet Christians that Jesus misses the most.
- We desire in the spirit of Jesus to go beyond our own cultural context to seek relationships with other people of different faiths or no faith at all. We also refuse to promote lies about other faiths and denounce racist prejudice, hatred, and fear incited in popular media.

## **G. SALVATION & THE GOSPEL: God's only way to connect with Him through a personal and public relationship with Him**

We LOVE the great story that God's salvation tells a broken world. It is good news (i.e., Gospel) in a world of bad news. We love that salvation is by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ and cannot be worked for or earned through any human works, traditions, or religious rituals (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 11:6; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:4-8). Yet we also love how saving faith never remains alone but shows itself in grace-motivated obedience that produces good works for which we were saved (Eph. 2:10). We are thankful that the Gospel announces that God's kingdom is available to all if they repent and believe (Mk. 1:15). The Gospel proclaims the historical events of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The Gospel declares that Jesus received what you and I deserved, but we forever inherit Jesus' right standing with God (2 Cor. 5:21). The Gospel transforms people to love God, others and joyfully obey His mission to reconcile all things to Himself (Col 1:19-20, Phil. 3:7-21; Tit. 2:14), a people who give everything they have because they understand that in Christ they already have everything they need (Col 2:9-10). We love how the Gospel rescues us from our past, secures our future, and constantly works in the present to set us free. We are no longer slaves to fear, insecurity, anger, self-reliance, bitterness, entitlement, and consumerism (Phil 2:12-13). We so appreciate the clarity of Jesus' Gospel in contrast to religion. Religion says that if you obey God, you will be accepted and loved. The Gospel of God says that you are accepted by God and therefore you are free to obey and love God. This is why we love the good news of God. Therefore, we will remind ourselves of the Gospel daily, seek out the company of other Christians who point us to Jesus and His Gospel, and prayerfully make the most of every opportunity to tell others about the One who is the Good News.

### Some Practical Applications:

- We thank God that the gospel gives us assurance that there is no condemnation and nothing in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ.
- We will tell of how the gospel works to bring transformation to individuals and communities to our local and global neighbors.
- We will speak about the gospel much so that people at FBC will be able to discern how others distort and create false gospels.

## **H. THE CHURCH: God's design for community is to be the hands, feet, heart and mouth of Christ to a hurting and broken world. This is why the church is the hope of the world!**

We LOVE how the Church, the people of God, are those from all ages and all nations whom God has loved, chosen, called, and sanctified to be His own treasured possession (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 1 Pet. 2:9). God has made all members of His Church new creations (2 Cor. 5:17), citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), and ambassadors for Him to a hurting and broken world (2 Cor.

5:20). We are in awe that God makes the Church the hope of the world because Jesus is the head of the Church (Col 1:18). We love how the people of God are the primary way that God's Kingdom prevails (Eph. 3:10). Therefore, we commit ourselves to loving the people of God and those who have yet to surrender their lives to His leadership and authority over their lives. We also devote ourselves to worshiping God together by praying, serving, fasting, singing, building Christ-centered community with one another, listening and responding to God's Word and celebrating communion and baptisms.

#### Some Practical Applications:

- We encourage Christians to adopt lifestyles that renounce habits of consumption that hinder the work of God from growing in and through of our lives.
- We urge all believers to accept and affirm their own ministry wherever God has called them to work. In other words, to be the church in their homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces.
- We humbly acknowledge that to grow in our faith in Jesus we need to surround ourselves with other like-minded Christians because growing Christians do not grow alone.

### **I. DOCTRINE TO AGREE TO DISAGREE – God gives His Church a gift called unity and we need to make every effort to nurture and protect that gift**

We LOVE that God is a God of unity and invites His followers to make every effort to reflect that unity to others (Jn. 17:20-23; Eph. 4:3-5). Therefore, we will not promote doctrines not listed above as primary issues within FBC. We will not break the unity of the body over many secondary issues of one's faith. In other words, we will major on the majors and minor on the minors. This is one way to nurture and cherish this wonderful gift of unity God gives His people so that with one mind and voice we may glorify Him (Rom. 15:5-6).

#### Some Practical Applications:

- We understand that living our lives in unity with other Christians cannot be based on our own strength, understanding and abilities. Otherwise, our commitment level will be grounded in people, programs, or a building instead of placing our commitment in the unity and mission of the Trinity that we are called to announce and demonstrate with others.
- We pray that God's love would overcome the differences in doctrine, preferences, styles, and personalities so that we can be a faithful witnessing community to demonstrate the power of the gospel that Jesus freely gives.
- We encourage respectful dialogue with those who we agree to disagree on secondary issues. May God grant us a spirit of humility in those conversations!
- We commit ourselves to keep the unity of God by not primarily focus on unity but rather on God's Truth and His Mission which is where unity flows from.