

# **VERVE CITY CHURCH**

# **OUR THEOLOGY**

## **Introduction**

At Verve City Church, everything we do is driven by one simple desire: to help people have their lives formed by Jesus. That's why we've created this booklet—because we believe that what we think about God shapes how we live. This isn't just theology for theology's sake. It's about discovering what's most important in your faith and using that as a foundation to build your life on.

Our hope is that this little guide becomes a resource you can come back to, helping you stay centered on what really matters as you journey with Jesus. In the pages that follow, we'll dive into why theology matters, the unique heartbeat of our church, and the beliefs that anchor us as a community. We believe this will not only equip you for today but will keep you grounded in truth as you grow deeper in your faith for years to come.

Let's get started.

## **Why Theology Matters**

Theology, at its core, is simply the pursuit of knowing God. Or, as Anselm called it, "faith seeking understanding." It's not a heady exercise or some abstract theory; it's about engaging with what God has already shown us about Himself, and from there, moving deeper into the mystery of who He is.

At Verve City Church, theology matters. But it's not a slick strategy for growth or a substitute for telling people about Jesus. Instead, our theology flows from how we see God revealed in Christ, and it shapes everything we do. How we think about God directly affects how we live—our faithfulness, our choices, and our desire to bring the good news of Jesus to those around us.

## **What are the Verve City Faith Expressions?**

Our Faith Expressions are a clear, accessible way of communicating the heartbeat of our theology. They answer the question: What matters most at Verve City Church?

Our church exists as a centered-set community. We focus not on rigid rules or checking off boxes of belief, but on being captivated by the person of Jesus. We long to be a community of people whose hearts beat for the same thing: pursuing the presence and purpose of Jesus with everything we have.

Our Faith Expressions help us translate this desire into real life. While they flow from our core theological convictions, they push us beyond just intellectual agreement. They call us to embody the radical way of Jesus, not just in what we say we believe but in how we actually live every single day, as a church and as individuals. Because, as Jesus himself taught, those who truly love him are the ones who follow his way.

## **What is the Lausanne Covenant?**

As a non-denominational church, we recognize the wisdom in anchoring our core beliefs to a time-tested, orthodox confession of faith. It's about staying rooted in the rich history of the global church while navigating the unique challenges of our time.

The Lausanne Covenant, adopted by over 2,700 religious leaders from 150 countries at the 1974 Lausanne Congress, is one of the most important modern church documents. It called Christians to unite in making Jesus known, emphasizing the centrality of the gospel and our responsibility to work for justice and reconciliation. The Covenant builds on the historic creeds like The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed, affirming the core beliefs of the Christian faith.

The Lausanne Covenant is like our theological compass, keeping our beliefs on course. It gives a clear, grounded summary of our faith, working alongside other writings to help us explain what it means to live out the way of Jesus. At our church, we hold to this covenant and don't teach anything that goes against it. It's our anchor for staying rooted in biblical faith and practice.

# VERVE CITY CHURCH

## FAITH EXPRESSIONS

**1. Jesus is Lord.** Everything about us starts and ends with Jesus, the key to understanding who God is and what God is like. Jesus showed us the heart of God by willingly laying down his life for the very people who nailed him to the cross. He taught us to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us, and to live our lives with purpose. Jesus is both fully God and fully human; he is our doorway to knowing, understanding, and experiencing God and our true humanity, and the model and means for our reunion with God. Jesus is the authoritative living God to us, and we submit to him as his lifelong apprentices, Kingdom citizens, commissioned ambassadors, and beloved friends. Through Jesus, we get to know the Father and the Spirit.

**2. God is Love.** The essence of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe is unconditional, selfless love. Because God is triune, three-in-one, he has existed as a perfect loving community, Father - Son - Holy Spirit, for all eternity. Everything God does is an expression of who God is, which is eternal infinite love. God does not love us because we are good; God loves us because he is good.

**3. The Spirit Empowers.** The Holy Spirit guides us toward Jesus, grows the fruit of love in our hearts, empowers us for ministry, and distributes spiritual gifts and talents among the Church to help build up the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit, we have the mind of Christ, and continue to experience the presence of God at all times for conviction, confirmation, and comfort.

**4. We are Valuable.** Humans are made by God for loving relationship with their Creator and with one another. The first word that the Scriptures say about us is that we are created in the image of God, crowned with glory and honor, sons and daughters of the Divine. The second word is the honest, unvarnished truth about how we all fall short, we all sin, we all disrupt the peace God intends for all things. As Jesus' parables of the lost coin, lost sheep, and lost son affirm, we have lost our way through our own sin and are unable to save ourselves. Jesus shows us a God who values us enough to pursue us, restore us to who we were made to be, and celebrate with us whenever we come home.

**5. Something is Wrong.** Jesus teaches, history demonstrates, and experience affirms that something is wrong with everything. This world is filled with both beauty and horror, and humans amplify experiences of both. Jesus calls the corrosive force that separates us from God, from each other, and from our better selves, "sin." Jesus came to heal our hearts, save us from sin, and show us a better way.

**6. Saved by Grace.** Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God inaugurated the New Covenant (a new way of being in relationship with God and one another), and offers us eternal and abundant life now, all as a gift. In this New Covenant, God gives all believers a new heart, a new spirit, and God's own Spirit to change us from the inside out. This is pure grace, which we receive by simple faith, expressed in following Jesus.

**7. Faith is Following.** Biblical "faith" includes "faithfulness." Jesus calls us to follow him, through death, into new life. Christians choose to pledge their allegiance to Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Teacher. In doing so, they repent (turn away) from sin in every area of their lives. We are not just believers, but disciples of Jesus, learning together how to obey everything he commands. A disciple spends time with Jesus, learning from Jesus, how to be like Jesus.

**8. Scripture is Inspired.** Like John the Baptist and the star of Bethlehem, the Bible points people to Jesus. The Bible, Old and New Testaments, is our God-given window to see Jesus most clearly, and is useful to equip us for living as his disciples. We believe in the divine inspiration of all Scripture and we read and interpret the Bible together, with Jesus at the center. Most importantly, the Bible helps us know Jesus, and Jesus helps us interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

**9. Peace is Pursued.** Because we see Jesus' life and teaching as God's authoritative Word to us, we take his teachings about all things – including peacemaking, reconciliation, and forgiveness – very seriously. We seek to live peaceful, reconciled lives, to encourage other believers to do the same, and to actively extend the peace of Jesus to the world.

**10. Citizens and Ambassadors.** Jesus came to establish his Kingdom and he invites us to live in it now. This is a Kingdom that transcends land and laws; a Kingdom of our hearts and relationships. This Kingdom defines for us a new culture and identity that stand in sweeping contrast to the kingdoms of this world. Christ-followers are ambassadors on behalf of the Kingdom of God to the people of all nations, with church communities functioning as embassies to experience a taste of what it means to live with Jesus as King. Our purpose every day is to accept God's invitation to partner with Jesus to experience, express, and extend the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

# The Lausanne Covenant

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ, from more than 150 nations, participants in the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, praise God for his great salvation and rejoice in the fellowship he has given us with himself and with each other. We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation. We desire, therefore, to affirm our faith and our resolve, and to make public our covenant.

**1. The Purpose of God.** We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name. We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it. Yet we rejoice that, even when borne by earthen vessels, the gospel is still a precious treasure. To the task of making that treasure known in the power of the Holy Spirit we desire to dedicate ourselves anew.

(Isaiah 40:28; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 1:11; Acts 15:14; John 17:6,18; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 4:7)

**2. The Authority and Power of The Bible.** We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. The message of the Bible is addressed to all men and women. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole Church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God.

(2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; John 10:35; Isaiah 55:11; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 1:16, Matthew 5:17,18; Jude 3; Ephesians 1:17,18; 3:10,18)

**3. The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ.** We affirm that there is only one Saviour and only one gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that everyone has some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for people suppress the truth by their

unrighteousness. We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Jesus Christ, being himself the only God-Man, who gave himself as the only ransom for sinners, is the only mediator between God and people. There is no other name by which we must be saved. All men and women are perishing because of sin, but God loves everyone, not wishing that any should perish but that all should repent. Yet those who reject Christ repudiate the joy of salvation and condemn themselves to eternal separation from God. To proclaim Jesus as 'the Saviour of the world' is not to affirm that all people are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ. Rather it is to proclaim God's love for a world of sinners and to invite everyone to respond to him as Saviour and Lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance and faith. Jesus Christ has been exalted above every other name; we long for the day when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue shall confess him Lord.

(Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 1:18-32; I Timothy 2:5,6; Acts 4:12; John 3:16-19; 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; John 4:42; Matthew 11:28; Ephesians 1:20,21; Philippians 2:9-11)

**4. The Nature of Evangelism.** To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that, as the reigning Lord, he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world.

(1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Acts 2:32-39; John 20:21; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:11,20; Luke 14:25-33; Mark 8:34; Acts 2:40,47; Mark 10:43-45)

**5. Christian Social Responsibility.** We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and Man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a

message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.

(Acts 17:26,31; Genesis 18:25; Isaiah 1:17; Psalm 45:7; Genesis 1:26,27; James 3:9; Leviticus 19:18; Luke 6:27,35; James 2:14-26; John 3:3,5; Matthew 5:20; 6:33; 2 Corinthians 3:18; James 2:20)

**6. The Church and Evangelism.** We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world. We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society. In the Church's mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary. World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. The Church is at the very centre of God's cosmic purpose and is his appointed means of spreading the gospel. But a church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross. It becomes a stumbling block to evangelism when it betrays the gospel or lacks a living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance. The church is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology.

(John 17:18; 20:21; Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; 20:27; Ephesians 1:9,10; 3:9-11; Galatians 6:14,17; 2 Corinthians 6:3,4; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; Philippians 1:27)

**7. Cooperation in Evangelism.** We affirm that the Church's visible unity in truth is God's purpose. Evangelism also summons us to unity, because our oneness strengthens our witness, just as our disunity undermines our gospel of reconciliation. We recognize, however, that organizational unity may take many forms and does not necessarily advance evangelism. Yet we who share the same biblical faith should be closely united in fellowship, work and witness. We confess that our testimony has sometimes been marred by a sinful individualism and needless duplication. We pledge ourselves to seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission. We urge the development of regional and functional cooperation for the furtherance of the Church's mission, for strategic planning, for mutual encouragement, and for the sharing of resources and experience.

(John 17:21,23; Ephesians 4:3,4; John 13:35; Philippians 1:27; John 17:11-23)

**8. Churches in Evangelistic Partnership.** We rejoice that a new missionary era has dawned. The dominant role of western missions is fast disappearing. God is raising up from the younger churches a great new resource for world evangelization, and is thus demonstrating that the responsibility to evangelize belongs to the whole body of Christ. All churches should therefore be asking God and themselves what they should be doing



both to reach their own area and to send missionaries to other parts of the world. A re-evaluation of our missionary responsibility and role should be continuous. Thus a growing partnership of churches will develop and the universal character of Christ's Church will be more clearly exhibited. We also thank God for agencies which labor in Bible translation, theological education, the mass media, Christian literature, evangelism, missions, church renewal and other specialist fields. They too should engage in constant self-examination to evaluate their effectiveness as part of the Church's mission.

(Romans 1:8; Philippians 1:5; 4:15; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8)

**9. The Urgency of the Evangelistic Task.** More than 2,700 million people, which is more than two-thirds of all humanity, have yet to be evangelized.<sup>1</sup> We are ashamed that so many have been neglected; it is a standing rebuke to us and to the whole Church. There is now, however, in many parts of the world, an unprecedented receptivity to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization. A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas. Missionaries should flow ever more freely from and to all six continents in a spirit of humble service. The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, to understand, and to receive the good news. We cannot hope to attain this goal without sacrifice. All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions and disturbed by the injustices which cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances accept our duty to develop a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to both relief and evangelism.

(John 9:4; Matthew 9:35-38; Romans 9:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Mark 16:15; Isaiah 58:6,7; James 1:27; 2:1-9; Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35)

**10. Evangelism and Culture.** The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture. Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because men and women are God's creatures, some of their culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because they are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have, all too frequently, exported with the gospel an alien culture, and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God.

(Mark 7:8,9,13; Genesis 4:21,22; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Philippians 2:5-7; 2 Corinthians 4:5)

1. Note: This statistic was correct at the time of publication in July 1974 and is deliberately preserved here for historic faithfulness. As of July 2024, researchers believe that more than 3.4 billion people remain unreached.



**11. Education and Leadership.** We confess that we have sometimes pursued church growth at the expense of church depth, and divorced evangelism from Christian nurture. We also acknowledge that some of our missions have been too slow to equip and encourage national leaders to assume their rightful responsibilities. Yet we are committed to indigenous principles, and long that every church will have national leaders who manifest a Christian style of leadership in terms not of domination but of service. We recognize that there is a great need to improve theological education, especially for church leaders. In every nation and culture there should be an effective training programme for pastors and laity in doctrine, discipleship, evangelism, nurture and service. Such training programmes should not rely on any stereotyped methodology but should be developed by creative local initiatives according to biblical standards.

(Colossians 1:27,28; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5,9; Mark 10:42-45; Ephesians 4:11,12)

**12. Spiritual Conflict.** We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the Church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. We know our need to equip ourselves with God's armour and to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons of truth and prayer. For we detect the activity of our enemy, not only in false ideologies outside the Church, but also inside it in false gospels which twist Scripture and put people in the place of God. We need both watchfulness and discernment to safeguard the biblical gospel. We acknowledge that we ourselves are not immune to worldliness of thought and action, that is, to a surrender to secularism. For example, although careful studies of church growth, both numerical and spiritual, are right and valuable, we have sometimes neglected them. At other times, desirous to ensure a response to the gospel, we have compromised our message, manipulated our hearers through pressure techniques, and become unduly preoccupied with statistics or even dishonest in our use of them. All this is worldly. The Church must be in the world; the world must not be in the Church.

(Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 4:3,4; Ephesians 6:11,13-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 1 John 2:18-26; 4:1-3; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2; John 17:15)

**13. Freedom and Persecution.** It is the God-appointed duty of every government to secure conditions of peace, justice and liberty in which the Church may obey God, serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and preach the gospel without interference. We therefore pray for the leaders of nations and call upon them to guarantee freedom of thought and conscience, and freedom to practise and propagate religion in accordance with the will of God and as set out in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also express our deep concern for all who have been unjustly imprisoned, and especially for those who are suffering for their testimony to the Lord Jesus. We promise to pray and work for their freedom. At the same time we refuse to be intimidated by their fate. God helping us, we too will seek to stand against injustice and to remain faithful to the gospel, whatever the cost. We do not forget the warnings of Jesus that persecution is inevitable.

(1 Timothy 1:1-4; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 13:1-3; Luke 4:18; Galatians 5:11; 6:12; Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-21)

**14. The Power of the Holy Spirit.** We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to his Son; without his witness ours is futile. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth and Christian growth are all his work. Further, the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit; thus evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled church. A church that is not a missionary church is contradicting itself and quenching the Spirit. Worldwide evangelization will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the Church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love and power. We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the sovereign Spirit of God that all his fruit may appear in all his people and that all his gifts may enrich the body of Christ. Only then will the whole Church become a fit instrument in his hands, that the whole earth may hear his voice.

(1 Corinthians 2:4; John 15:26;27; 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3; John 3:6-8; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 7:37-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Acts 1:8; Psalm 85:4-7; 67:1-3; Galatians 5:22,23; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; Romans 12:3-8)

**15. The Return of Christ.** We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, in power and glory, to consummate his salvation and his judgment. This promise of his coming is a further spur to our evangelism, for we remember his words that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. We believe that the interim period between Christ's ascension and return is to be filled with the mission of the people of God, who have no liberty to stop before the end. We also remember his warning that false Christs and false prophets will arise as precursors of the final Antichrist. We therefore reject as a proud, self-confident dream the notion that people can ever build a utopia on earth. Our Christian confidence is that God will perfect his kingdom, and we look forward with eager anticipation to that day, and to the new heaven and earth in which righteousness will dwell and God will reign forever. Meanwhile, we re-dedicate ourselves to the service of Christ and of people in joyful submission to his authority over the whole of our lives.

(Mark 14:62; Hebrews 9:28; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8-11; Matthew 28:20; Mark 13:21-23; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3; Luke 12:32; Revelation 21:1-5; 2 Peter 3:13; Matthew 28:18)

**Conclusion.** Therefore, in the light of this our faith and our resolve, we enter into a solemn covenant with God and with each other, to pray, to plan and to work together for the evangelization of the whole world. We call upon others to join us. May God help us by his grace, and for his glory, to be faithful to this our covenant! Amen, Alleluia!