

# THE MISSION AND VALUES

## OF WHEATON BIBLE CHURCH



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## I. OUR MISSION

Our mission is that ***more and more people would Love God, Grow Together, and Reach the World***. We long for an ever-increasing number of people to live vertically, love radically, and lift up Christ boldly. At Wheaton Bible Church, this mission is our vision and our goal. It has worked—and is working—because it is simple, brief, easily understood, and widely held. This mission drives everything we do, both in our North Avenue congregations and at other campuses as they are established.

## II. OUR VALUES

Values reflect theological vision and core convictions. Building on our doctrinal statement, they serve as guardrails for our mission, ministry strategies, and programmatic choices at all our campuses. They are the *spiritual oxygen* we breathe. Our values are our DNA. The underlined statements below are the repeatable culture-building statements that we long for everyone who is part of Wheaton Bible Church to embrace and live by.

1. **Gospel-centrality:** *The Gospel isn't just the starting line, it's the whole race.* The Gospel changes everything: our heart motivations, relationships, work, and the fruit of our service in the world (Eph. 3:16–19, Titus 2:12). The Gospel is the good news that God is making everything wrong in us and in the world right through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (See 1 Cor. 15:1–8; Col 1:19–20.)

In *Center Church*, Tim Keller explains: “The gospel is not just the ABCs but the A to Z of the Christian life. It is inaccurate to think the gospel is what saves non-Christians, and then Christians mature by trying hard to live according to biblical principles. It is more accurate to say that we are saved by believing the gospel, and then we are transformed in every part of our minds, hearts, and lives by believing the gospel more and more deeply as life goes on” (p. 48). (See Rom. 12:1–2; Phil. 1:6; 3:13–14.)

Simply put, we believe there can be no ministry or cultural renewal apart from heart renewal (Prov. 4:23). The key to heart renewal is Gospel renewal, mediated by the life-giving power and presence of the Holy Spirit (Titus 2:11–15; Rom. 8:13–14). Therefore we will preach to and focus on the human heart by continually nuancing and pointing to the richness of the Gospel. We believe it is in looking away from ourselves and to the beauty, sufferings, and sufficiency of Christ crucified and raised from the dead that we overcome our idolatry, bondage, and sin (Titus 2:11).

We are grace-centered and Gospel-centered, not works-centered. Where secularism can make people selfish and individualistic, religion/moralism can make us self-righteous and exclusionary. But it's a life of continually basking in the Gospel of grace—centered on a suffering Savior who freely gave of Himself to die for His enemies and is now raised from

the dead—that delivers us from selfishness on the one hand and self-righteousness on the other. As pastor and theologian John Calvin has said, “Holiness is not something we merit, it is a gift we receive from Jesus that enables us to cling to him and follow him.”

Furthermore, the Gospel is the key to reaching our mission. As J.D. Greear says in *Gaining by Losing*: “Do you want to develop a sending culture at your church? Teach your people to delight in the glorious riches of what Christ has done on their behalf. Marvel in it every week. Ask God to open the eyes of their hearts to see how high, how wide, how deep, and how long the love of God is for them. Ask God to let them feel that love. Let it simmer in them until it sets their hearts on fire. And then, I promise you, they will figure out a way to reach their world. . . . Apart from genuine, gospel-rooted heart change, sending will never take root in our churches. With it, we won’t be able to stop it. . . . The gospel alone produces the passion that sustains the mission. Programs and institutions can be useful servants of passion, but never its sustenance. The gospel is its sustenance” (pp. 66–67).

2. **Spirit dependence:** *Where the Holy Spirit leads, we will follow.* We long to seek God’s face, bask in the grace Jesus offers us, and listen to and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:22–23). Because we are unequal to God’s great calling on our lives, He has given us the Spirit to guide us, empower us, and give us victory as God counts victory. It is the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives that continually mediates and points to Christ and the grace that is ours in the Gospel. The Spirit is most active when Jesus and His grace is the most tangible, real and felt in our lives.

Importantly, this Jesus-centered, Spirit dependence means we will take risks for Christ because we believe risk is a Kingdom virtue. Risk is born in Spirit-dependent, prayerful confidence in the goodness, faithfulness, and sovereignty of God. We believe Matthew 25:14–30 teaches that failure to take risks for the Kingdom—by not leveraging our “talents”—is as evil as any sin. Anything less Jesus calls “wicked” and “lazy” (Mt. 25:26).

3. **Sending:** *We exist to send and be sent.* God is a sending God. He sent His best (Jesus) into the world to rescue and redeem us. Following the resurrection, Jesus passed on His mission, identity, and DNA to the church: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). *Sending* and *going* are two sides of the same coin, and are major themes in the New Testament. *Sending* is emphasized in John 20:21 and *going* in the Matthew 28:18–20 Great Commission.

By God’s grace, the great strength of WBC is that we are *a sending church*. God planted this sending DNA into WBC from its very beginning in 1929, when at the first Elders meeting, six missionaries were appointed to fulltime overseas service. Amazingly, decade after decade we have continued to send almost six missionaries a year into full time service.

However, our weakness is that our concept of sending has been often too narrow, focusing on missionaries (a good thing), but not empowering and celebrating our lay people or our groups in their pursuits of finishing the Great Commission (Mt. 28) and seeking the common good of families, friends, work places, and communities where we live (Mt. 5:13–16). We believe God has blessed us to be a blessing—locally and globally. God has made us to be a Gospel

river, not a reservoir—a river that always seeks human flourishing through both our evangelism (Rom. 10:14–15) and our “good deeds” (Mt. 5:16, 1 Pet. 2:12).

All this flows out of our belief that the ultimate purpose of Jesus finished work on the cross was both to save sinners (John 3:16) and to renew all creation (Rev. 21:5). Serving the good of all people often creates an entry point for sharing the Gospel as people see how much we care and love. At WBC, we will give ourselves to seeking *conversions*, pursuing the *common good*, and starting *new churches* (3Cs).

4. **Priesthood of all believers:** *Everyone is called to all-the-time ministry* and that ministry is just as important as the ministry of any pastor or missionary (1 Pet. 2:9). The NT teaches there are many important dimensions to this ministry including family, church, friends, neighbors, and culture. However, one often neglected dimension is our vocations (where most people spend most of their lives). According to the Bible, everyone has a vocational calling from God (Jer. 29:7, 1 Cor. 7:17) and one of the most effective ways to renew and contribute to the culture we live in as exiles is through our daily work (Col. 3:23, 1 Pet. 2:12). Our vocations matter to God and God matters to our vocations.

Sadly, we recognize that too often the greatest enemy to integrating faith and work has been the church, because in the church we have created a dualism—separating faith and work, sacred and secular, and emphasizing that discipleship is something that happens inside the church instead of preparing people for life outside the church. All this is because we have failed to see that all the Bible, from Genesis 1 on, speaks to the integration of faith and work, not just one or two isolated passages.

Therefore, we believe the week is as important as the weekend: we gather to scatter; huddle to run the play. We scatter as public disciples, sent into the world to serve a public Savior, who lived a public life and died a public death. Sending impacts all dimensions of our lives, including our vocations.

5. **Deep & wide:** *Healthy believers go deep and wide.* What does this mean? It means we seek to be characterized by Gospel-theological depth, in contrast to superficial or shallow religion, and by a passion to reach lost people, in contrast to evangelical individualism and indifference. We believe there is no theological depth apart from evangelism and no sustainable evangelism without a deep, biblically informed heart and mind (Acts 17:11, Mt. 28:18–20).
6. **Community:** *Small groups are the spinal column of our community.* As we multi-site, it is essential that we see small groups as *primary* and midsize groups as *secondary*. Why? Because while we will continue to have active midsize groups at our North Avenue campus, only small groups are exportable to our other campuses. Therefore it is imperative that we build a common small group ministry that creates a vibrant experience of community for all WBC adults, regardless of what campus they attend.

We believe cultural renewal and evangelistic fruit multiplies through small groups (Acts 2:46). WBC's small groups will go deep and wide by openly and honestly processing life together, holding one another accountable, giving themselves to annual local and global flourishing projects, and raising up leaders who multiply into other groups. Our small group DNA will be to reproduce and restore.

Why is this? We believe discipleship happens in relationships. The point of everything we do is making disciples (2 Tim. 2:2). Discipleship, however, is never merely a program or a Bible study, it is inviting people into our lives. A disciple-making culture means people first, program second. We will be highly relational and loving—welcoming, honoring and preferring all people as made in the image of God.

7. **Leadership development:** ***The church is a servant-leader development community.*** We are contributors not consumers. (Mt. 20:26-28) As Jesus promised in John 14:12, our greatest delight is to release ordinary people and groups to do extraordinary things (“greater things”) for Christ. This is exactly what Jesus did with twelve hesitating and very ordinary men. Therefore, we will point people to the life-changing power of the Gospel, develop a common leadership development pipeline, and send servant-leaders out to change the world.
8. **Humility:** ***In light of our brokenness, we are a hospital, not a country club.*** We will pray and pray because we believe that apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). We will avoid defensiveness, and self-righteousness. We will assume that we are often wrong, blinded, self-centered, and insecure. We will value hearing, “I was wrong,” followed by laughter, because our confidence is never in ourselves, but in God’s grace in Christ. Admitting our fears, weaknesses, and battles allows others to see the Gospel at work in our lives. We will not be a place where sin will be indulged, but a place of transformation, healing, and growth.
9. **Prayer:** ***There is power in prayer.*** Paraphrasing Paul Tripp: If God intended our lives and ministries to be easy, they would be, but God cares enough to break our bones in order to capture our heart. We pray in good times and bad because Jesus commanded us to (Mt. 7:7–8) and because we believe prayer changes things (James 4:2–3). What *location, location, location* is to real estate, *prayer, prayer, prayer* is to the Kingdom. With Isaiah we pray, “Rain down righteousness. . . . Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it” (Isa. 45:8). A culture of sending (John 20:21) is impossible apart from prayer (John 17:20–26).
10. **Evangelism is primary:** ***We will do whatever it takes to reach people for Christ.*** Jesus is the hope of the world so seeing people come to Christ is our greatest desire and joy (Luke 15:7). While not diminishing the critical nature of seeking the good of all people, we recognize that apart from Christ people are lost. So we must lift up Christ. According to Romans 10:14–15, reaching the world with the good news of Jesus Christ is not optional, it’s a “beautiful” obligation—a matter of obedience, regardless of how dark or difficult the situation might be. The Great Commission must never become the Great Omission; we will tirelessly give ourselves to spiritual multiplication. While evangelism is often two nervous people talking to each other, the message is always worth the awkwardness. We believe in

both attractional (Easter, Children's, Men's and Women's outreach events) and missional (one-on-one) evangelism, and believe *missional living is doing what you do alongside a nonbeliever*. (1 Cor. 9:22) We believe partnering with like-minded ministries and churches is essential to achieving our mission. That is why multi-siting/church planting is essential—it is one of the most effective means of evangelism.

**11. Diversity: *Diversity honors God.*** Jesus came to create unity among racially, ethnically, economically, generationally, married or single, male or female diverse peoples (Rev. 5:9). We will honor all people and reflect diversity in all aspects of our ministries. We are a multi-ethnic / multi-congregational / multi-venue / multi-site church.

**12. Generous justice: *We will seek and care for the under-resourced and vulnerable.*** In the Bible, *justice* has a range of meanings. One of the most dominant is to treat all people equitably (Lev. 24:22). But justice is not only the righting of wrongs. It is also used to describe generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable. (See Job 31:16–28 and Ezekiel 18:5, 7–8, where mercy, fairness, compassion, and radical generosity are identified as characteristics of those who live a just life.) Over and over the Old Testament describes justice as taking special care of widows, orphans, immigrants, the poor and oppressed (Zech. 7:9–10, Isaiah 58:6–7).

In the New Testament, we discover that Jesus came to bring forgiveness, hope, and grace. A true experience of that grace always motivates His people to seek compassionate, generous justice, and the common good of all people. The Gospel is never a social gospel, but the Gospel always has social implications. This is the point of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan where a man risked his safety, abandoned his schedule and became dirty, even bloodied, by personally involving himself in the care of a needy person of another race and class (Luke 10:25–37). In this parable, Jesus boldly attacks the complacency of the comfortably religious who isolate themselves from the glaring needs of others. Then He concludes the parable by commanding, "Go, and do likewise." WBC is committed to obeying Jesus by extending God's saving grace and common grace to all, especially the neediest around us. As we multiply our campuses, this *generous justice* will be a key piece of our strategy as we move into new communities.

John Calvin, in his *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*, speaks to developing a heart for justice when he writes: "First of all, Christians ought to imagine themselves in the place of the person who needs their help, and they ought to sympathize with him as though they themselves were suffering; they ought to show real mercy and humaneness and offer their assistance as readily as if it were for themselves. Heartfelt pity will banish arrogance and reproach, and will prevent contempt and domineering over the poor and the needy."

**The Culture-Building Repeatable Statements  
That Embody Our Values**

1. *The Gospel isn't just the starting line, it's the whole race.*
2. *Where the Holy Spirit leads, we will follow.*
3. *We exist to send and be sent.*
4. *Everyone is called to all-the-time ministry.*
5. *Healthy believers go deep and wide.*
6. *Small groups are the spinal column of our community.*
7. *The church is a servant-leader development community.*
8. *In light of our brokenness, we are a hospital not a country club.*
9. *There is power in prayer.*
10. *We will do whatever it takes to reach people for Christ.*
11. *Diversity honors God.*
12. *We will seek and care for the under-resourced and vulnerable.*