

The We Are Church Covenant

The We Are Church Network exists to cover, equip, encourage, support, and connect churches who are pursuing a similar vision for the church. Here are some ways we hope to accomplish this through the WAC Network:

- Accountability and Covering
 - One of the primary reasons for becoming a We Are Church is for the purpose of covering and accountability. The local body and elders will have other elders whom they are accountable to and submit to in times of conflict or challenges locally.
- Coaching & Training Access
 - We hope to have a consistent rhythm of opportunities for those in the network to join with We Are Church leaders on Zoom calls as well as in-person events where there will be deeper training, vision, times of Q&A, and coaching.
- Supportive Networking
 - We feel it is important for each of us to not be on our own. As people go through the CI training or contact Crazy Love, we will point them towards people in the WAC Network in their area for connection. The hope is that through the network, we can see local networks and stronger churches formed by helping people connect.
- Ongoing Vision
 - The WAC Network serves as a way to tap into bigger conversations and vision within the movement of “rethinking church”, with WAC leaders sharing new things that are being learned from around the world.
- Greater Community
 - The WAC Network serves as an opportunity to be a part of a larger community of like-minded people who are committed to supporting each other in various ways.
- Sharing Resources
 - We Are Church will continue to create resources that will hopefully be a blessing to the network, and also hope is also that among those in the network there will be spaces to share resources with each other.

Churches within the WAC Network are not expected to be rigidly tied to a specific structure, or more nuanced decisions within the local church, but they must carry similar principles, vision, and DNA. DNA can be difficult to assess, but that will be part of what we hope to discern along the way.

Many people are called to plant churches that may not line up with the vision of We Are Church and we fully bless and love those churches. Our hope is that the WAC Network serves the purpose of supporting and covering those who are fully in alignment with the principles of WAC and desire to be under the covering and leadership of We Are Church.

Components of a local We Are Church

- 1) Values
- 2) Practices
- 3) Doctrine
- 4) Governance
- 5) Relationship

1: Six Values of a We Are Church

Devoted Worshippers

We want to be people who are devoted to worshiping Jesus. We want to carve out time daily to be alone for prayer and Bible reading. We make time to join with others to pray and study His Word. We regularly celebrate the Lord's Supper and can't stop thanking Him for His mercy. These are not obligations we try to squeeze in, but cravings we can't live without. We don't require gifted communicators or musicians; we just love to worship Jesus even in the most basic settings. It is the Object of worship that makes worship exciting to us.

Notes for leaders in regard to Devoted Worshippers:

- A We Are Church has the primary goal of seeing increased devotion and pure worship to Jesus, not simply adding attendees or even increasing professions of faith. Scripture clearly lays out for us a high commitment in following Jesus, and we must not compromise on this for the sake of pursuing numbers. Some have made intentional efforts to make it easy to follow Jesus, but from the beginning it has always been a narrow path, one of picking up a cross and following Him wherever He would lead. Though His yoke is easy and burden is light, nonetheless we are called to come and die. We are to be churches marked by selling the field in order to gain Christ (Matthew 13:44-46), of all-in commitment.
- With all of this being true, we are also a people of great patience, grace, and love as people grow, struggle, step forward, and fall back. We are committed to living this out together, even when times are tough. The challenge for us is to both maintain a high expectation of being a follower of Jesus as well as "be patient with everyone" (1 Thess 5:14). We see this tension in Scripture and it's one that we must hold in tension. We must fight to not slip into the "easy believism" that has plagued much of Western Christianity with cheap grace and a low bar of what it means to be a Christian. And we also must not slip into a legalistic faith that moves away from the beauty of the gospel that preaches of a Messiah who died for sinners and lavishes His grace on the undeserving.
- What does it look like within each local church to uphold a high commitment to Jesus while also being those filled with a great confidence in the grace and kindness of Jesus in the midst of our sin? That can vary. But it is an essential dynamic within each We Are Church. A couple of keys:
 - We don't want to hold tightly to things that aren't clear in Scripture. We don't want people to leave the church because we made something up that we are holding them vigorously to. It needs to be the Bible. And that's at the core of our "Traditions vs. Commands" topic.
 - We want to be very patient with people and give them chance after chance after chance (as Jesus does with each of us), without compromising the idea that our goal is to obey Christ in all that we do. Discipleship takes time and people will often have ups and downs. The hope is that people would experience the kingdom of God within We Are Church in a way where they know Jesus calls

them to full commitment, but also He loves them deeply and He will meet them where they are in their brokenness and walk with them.

- If a group of friends consistently gather to watch their favorite team play where all of them are devoted fans except for one who could care less, it wouldn't take long for it to become clear who doesn't love the team. We want to be so committed to loving Jesus that it stands out when someone doesn't, with the hope that that person would not feel shamed or excluded, but rather challenged and inspired to build their relationship with Jesus.
- Helpful questions for assessment within the church on Devoted Worshipers:
 - Are your people obsessed with knowing and loving the Person of Jesus?
 - Do your people seem to love spending time with the Lord by themselves?
 - Do your people love reading the Bible and meditating on the word?
 - Do your people show signs of receiving deep insights and conviction from their own personal time with the Lord that has nothing to do with the pastor's teaching?
 - Do your people seem to be changed by their times with Jesus on their own?
 - Do your people love praying together for extended periods of time?
 - Do your people love to gather together regardless of who's leading in teaching or worship?
 - Do your people love singing out to God regardless of if it's led by a gifted worship band or a deep lover of Jesus with limited singing ability?

Loving Families

We want to be people who love each other deeply and show this by our sacrifice. We seek a bond that surpasses that of our natural families and is only possible because of our common fellowship with Jesus. We share our possessions and our lives with each other. We seek to obey all of the "one another" commands in Scripture. Christ wants us to be known for our love, and He claimed that our unity would cause others to believe in Him. Our goal is not merely to get along but to love each other to the extent that Christ loved us, and to be united to the extent that the Father is one with the Son.

Notes for leaders in regard to Loving Families:

- Deep, loving relationships within the body of Christ are not an optional add-on to our faith. It is core to who we are and how we function together. Therefore this is to be a high priority for any We Are Church. If the DNA of the church is Sunday centric we've missed it. If the people in the church don't view each other as close friends/family who are connected in everyday life, then we've missed it.
- Leaders within a We Are Church are called to spiritual parenting. Often leadership in the church has been viewed primarily as being from a stage, behind a desk, or taking various responsibilities of management and such. It's not that these things can't be included, but our view is leadership is primarily taking place through loving relationships, and one of the clearest roles of the leader is spiritual parenting. Paul calls compares his leadership to fathering and mothering back to back when he writes to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:6-12). Jesus gave so much time and nurturing to His twelve disciples.
- Helpful questions for assessment within the church on Loving Families:

- Do they give and care for their church family like their biological family?
- Do they spend more time thinking about themselves or others?
- Do they effectively use their spiritual gifts to build up the others?
- Do your people regularly meet each other's needs, physically, emotionally, and spiritually?
- Do your people love being together outside of regular church functions?
- Do your people feel confident enough in the loving relationships to the extent that they can be honest about sin, fears, and needs?
- Do your people sacrifice for each other in various ways?

Equipped Disciple-Makers

We want our people to become fully trained for greater works of service. We believe that all believers should be disciple makers. No one should come as a consumer, but all should come as servants. The Holy Spirit has given each of us a gift that is to be used for building up the body. We want our leaders to teach us how to lead and help us develop in character through their modeling and teaching. Our goal is that each one of us becomes like Christ, and develops the ability to lead others to Him, make disciples, and plant churches.

Notes for leaders in regard to Equipped Disciple-Makers:

- The tendency is real, even within smaller churches, for people to slowly start consuming more and expecting the pastor or leader to carry the majority of the weight in the church. And even within house churches the expectation can remain present that the pastors will be responsible to create ministry opportunities and set everything up for others to be able to serve or share the gospel. We need to push against this a couple of different ways:
 - Stepping back: It's important that we don't take everything on as leaders. So often we've thought of leadership primarily as serving others by teaching, counseling, etc. We tend to become the problem solvers and ones who do it for everyone. We need to become comfortable delegating a variety of responsibilities, not because of laziness but for the sake of empowering others.
 - Intentional Empowerment: We need to press heavily into the idea of calling people into things, coaching them, empowering, and watching them do things. Some people have used the acronym MAWL to show the progression of how we help others take on more: Model, Assist, Watch, Leave. As a parent's goal is not to keep their kids in their home the rest of their lives, so as leaders in the church we want to do all we can to help the people in the church be equipped to step into their giftings and more leadership.
 - Releasing: It's one thing to empower others, and it's another to release. Releasing something implies a deeper level of losing control. In releasing, the next person will naturally shape and lead that thing differently than how we would. But if we have led and disciplined them well, then the essence and DNA will persevere even though the form or practical outworking may look different.
 - The true fruit of an apple tree is not apples. It's new apple trees, or even an orchard of new apple trees. That's the beautiful thing about how God has created

things in a reproducing way. So the true fruit of a leader is not primarily followers, but actually more leaders.

- Helpful questions for assessment within the church on Equipped Disciple-Makers:
 - If they lived in a city with no other believers, would they be able to mature in Christ, and make disciples?
 - Do your people each have someone who is taking responsibility for their spiritual care and development?
 - Do your people each actively seek to take responsibility for discipling others (either of believers or non-believers)?
 - Do your people see themselves as being trained to become leaders who can train others?
 - Do your people desire to care for and lead others spiritually?
 - Do your people view themselves as the main catalyst for evangelism and discipleship?
 - Do your people (including leaders) each see themselves as just as valuable a part of the church as anyone else?
 - Do your people exercise their spiritual gifts for the building up of the body?

Spirit-Filled Missionaries

We want to be people with supernatural character, focused on sharing the gospel with neighbors and coworkers. We want to be people who are not focused on survival or higher standards of living, but devoted to the mission. For some, this will mean going to foreign countries to share Christ where He has not been heard. For others, this means supporting those who have gone. For everyone, it means sharing the gospel regularly.

Notes for leaders in regard to Spirit-Filled Missionaries:

- One tendency for leaders in this expression of the church is to slip into primarily thinking about gatherings and making sure everyone is doing OK. It can become more passive and reactionary rather than filled with faith and aggressively taking ground. Leaders should be thinking about how to consistently stir the people in their church towards faith and gospel proclamation. Some things we have found helpful for pointing people towards the mission of God:
 - 1) Creating opportunities to do outreach as a body together.
 - Ideally this will not fall completely on the pastor to lead, but would involve people with the gifts of evangelism and/or mercy in the body to call the body into action.
 - 2) Regular conversations around the mission, discussing who we've shared with, how it's gone, and what we're hoping to do going forward.
 - 3) Having vision conversations with people in the body to learn what God has put on their heart to reach people outside the church. From this we want to see as a body how we can support each other in these efforts.
- Helpful questions for assessment within the church on Spirit-Filled Missionaries:
 - Do they regularly share the gospel while displaying character that evidences the Holy Spirit?
 - Do your people show a deep concern for lost people?

- Do your people regularly share the gospel with non-believers?
- Do your people embrace the idea of moving out of their comfort zone for the sake of the gospel?
- Do your people display a desire for the Holy Spirit to fill them with power to impact those around them?
- Do your people's decisions seem to be motivated more by God's will/desires for their life or by their will/desires for their life?
- Do your people display the fruit of the Spirit in a manner that separates them from those who don't have the Spirit?

Suffering Sojourners

We want to be people who are eagerly waiting for the return of Christ. We are willing and wanting to suffer because we believe in heavenly rewards. Far from seeking comfort, we thrive on any hardship we get to endure for His Name. Our focus is not on what we can see, but on the unseen world. We refuse to become citizens on this earth. We live as aliens and strangers on the earth, waiting for a better city.

Notes for leaders in regard to Suffering Sojourners:

- Paul writes to challenge the mindset of the Corinthian leaders, and how they understood their place in this world:
 - 1 Cor 4: “**8** Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! **9** For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. **10** We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. **11** To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, **12** and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; **13** when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.”

This sort of leadership has unfortunately become uncommon in our day. The temptation towards greed, selfish ambition, prestige, honor, etc. among leaders today is rampant. We must choose to reject these and follow Jesus in the way of the cross. We must follow the example of the apostles who were “the scum of the world”.

- Our modeling this sort of lifestyle as leaders in the church is of such great significance for our people to walk also in the way of the cross. Of course we make decisions to sacrifice in regard to where we meet, how we gather, etc., but these sort of structural church decisions, though helpful in creating culture, fall short of what we are truly seeking here. It has to start with us. As you consider the following questions, first ask for yourself personally and the leaders in the church before considering the people.
- Helpful questions for assessment within the church on Suffering Sojourners:
 - In what ways do they sacrifice, proving their anticipation of eternity with Christ?
 - Do your people display an excitement about Heaven?
 - Do your people display deep, abiding joy in the middle of conflict and suffering?

- Do your people fearlessly make faithful decisions (i.e. fostering, adoption, simple living, moving into harder areas, gospel proclamation) even though it may result in hardship to them, or do they instead typically play it safe?
- Do your people show a willingness to jeopardize their job or social status for the gospel?
- Do your people make daily sacrifices because of the hope they have in Jesus' return?

Care for the Poor

We want to be people who are marked by compassion, generosity, and associating with the lowly. We see Jesus calling His disciples to give to those who can't pay you back (Luke 6:35, Luke 14:12). He taught radical love for your neighbor, which clearly includes strangers and the vulnerable, and will cost you greatly of time and resources (Luke 10:25-37). He called His disciples to sacrifice their lifestyle consistently to care for the poor (Luke 12:33).

Notes for leaders in regard to Care for the Poor:

- Helpful questions for assessment within the church on Care for the Poor:
 - Do your people care a lot about money, career, sports, possessions, entertainment, etc.?
 - Do your people give generously to the poor?
 - Do your people think about how to meet the needs of the poor?
 - Does it seem like your people care more about people who are hurting or more about things and comforts?

2: Five Practices of We Are Church

Our five practices clarify how every person can dynamically participate in relationship with Jesus across the breadth of our church. At We Are Church, we want our relationship with Jesus to affect and infect every area of our lives, which is why we seek to embrace each of these practices continually. We want to have a deep devotional life in Jesus, seek to be and to make disciples, stay connected in community, serve and participate in our corporate gatherings and live on mission where God has planted each of us. We pursue these five practices because we want more of Jesus and we want Jesus to be glorified by, in and through us and His Church.

1) Devotion to Reading Scripture

- A We Are Church deeply desires, and intentionally structures things in a way for, the people in our churches to be committed to reading the Bible consistently (hopefully daily), meeting with the Lord, and receiving from Him in ways that are life giving, transformative, and foundational for their walk with the Lord.
 - It is not enough to say “we want people to read the Bible in our church”. We are committed to seeing a culture established where what has been described is reflective of the vast majority of our people.
 - A daily Bible reading plan is recommended but not required. If you are doing a reading plan as a church, we would recommend doing the SF WAC reading plan for the sake of larger fellowship around the word of God.
- Biblical foundation:
 - Matthew 7:24-27: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”
 - We must be people are committed to hearing Jesus’ words and also obeying His words. This is the “wise man who built his house on the rock.”
 - Hebrews 4:12-13: “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”
 - We are called to be a church who encounters the word of God as living and active in our lives corporately and individually.

- 2 Tim 3:14-17: “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
 - We recognize that the Scriptures are “able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” and that all Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”. Our wisdom for salvation and being equipped for good works is directly tied to our commitment to the Scriptures.
- Joshua 1:7-8: “Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
 - We want to be so committed to the word of God that we would fulfill this exhortation towards carefulness to do according to the word of God. Each member of the body should be treating His word with such respect that we see a focus on not deviating from His words to the right or to the left.
- Psalm 119

2) Small, Simple Gatherings

- Small: A We Are Church has strongly committed churches that meet in smaller contexts where it functions as a family at least once a week.
 - We love meeting in homes for the sake of intimacy, reproducibility, and family, but the point is not to meet in homes. The main point isn’t even meeting small and simple. We have chosen this approach, however, because our goal is to functionally live out family together. Healthy families have deep relationships with each other, they have parents (recognized leadership), and they aren’t so big that the parents don’t know the kids.
 - For each church there may be a different discernment on what number of people starts to undermine the family feel. In We Are Church’s history in the SF Bay Area we’ve typically been in the range of 10 to 25 adults. This is not meant to be a restriction on size, but hopefully a guide post.
 - We are OK with a church having a larger gathering if...

- a) The average person in the church views their smaller, family gathering as the primary (or most important) expression of church rather than the larger gathering. The commitment to the smaller expression of family, or “home church”, should be strong and not viewed as secondary or optional.
 - b) They don’t become so elaborate or large that it...
 - i) Draws the focus of the leaders away from using their gifts to equip the saints in relational ways.
 - ii) Undermines the value of devoted worshippers by creating a culture where people understand their membership in the church primarily as an attendee, or are drawn to the church because of how excellent the service is.
- Simple: A We Are Church is committed to gatherings and overall structure which is intentionally simple. This means:
 - a) It should be a place where people who are non-educated and non-professionals feel comfortable to share, contribute, and lead (if Biblically qualified) because it is not so overly complex or professional that they don’t fit.
 - b) We intentionally hold back from anything that would undermine our reliance on the power of the Spirit working through the gospel and our love for Him and one another. This will often mean an intentional resistance to using clever, impressive strategies and tools that are not coming from reliance on the Spirit’s power. We don’t want to be too descriptive with this, as it takes discernment on when lines are crossed in this area. But overall we fight to not perform for people, but instead seek to please the Lord and trust He will work how He desires.
 - c) Our gatherings (and our church life as a whole) are marked by devotion to what God has commanded of us as believers, rather than appealing to people who may not be as interested in that. Much of the church has tailored their gatherings towards making things comfortable for the lost, yet we simply don’t see this mindset in Scripture. Our goal is to be a community passionate for Jesus, and we trust that the Lord will add to our number in miraculous ways. This means we resist compromise or watering down what it means to be a part of this church in order to get people to join.
- Biblical foundation:
 - Acts 2:42-47 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple

together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- There are many things that God highlights about the early church here, but in light of the topic of smaller, intimate gatherings, let's specifically notice that one of the things the early church was marked by is their devotion to fellowship. They also were functioning so relationally that they shared their possessions with each other freely. The early church was also marked by regularly gathering and breaking bread in their homes. This is what we strive to be.
- 1 Cor 1:13 - 2:5

3) Everyone Disciples and Discipled

- Everyone Discipled: A We Are Church is very intentional about seeing deep, transparent, consistent discipleship relationships functioning regularly outside of gathering times.
 - One thing we can fall into is thinking that we are fulfilling the “one another(s)” by simply gathering in a home in a smaller context, but we believe that every believer in the church should be meeting up consistently (i.e., once every week or two) either one on one or in a small group (3 to 5) of same gender where confession, real life conversation, and deep love is cultivated.
 - This is often met with great challenge, as people will tend to desire to drift away from relational commitments, but is of such great importance for leaders in WAC churches to hold this culture and expectation that people are consistently prioritizing time with one another.
 - A common push back against more intentional/structured discipleship formats is that it should be more “organic” in nature. We love when deep, meaningful relationships form in an organic way. While this should be highly encouraged, we have found that this approach typically leads towards a very “hit or miss” type approach to meaningful relationships. Sometimes they will happen and sometimes not, and then tend to drift towards not happening. For this reason we feel it is important to put structure (though there is flexibility in what it is) to these relationships to ensure that they are prioritized consistently over time.
 - We don't have set curriculums or formats. Our primary goal is for deep, meaningful relationships where we regularly confess sin, share important life situations, work through big decisions, pray for each other, and overall shape in each through counsel from the word of God.
- Everyone Disciples: A We Are Church strives to set a culture where each person in the body embraces their role as a disciple maker of others.

- For everyone this will include engaging unbelievers in conversations about God. For some this will mean that they are taking responsibility for caring for believers in the body as well. We want to be intentional to cultivate a culture where people understand they are called to take responsibility for the spiritual care of others, both unbelievers and believers. We don't have a staff person who bears that burden for us.
- What this looks like can vary from church to church. Some churches will regularly do outreach together. Some may determine ways to regularly discuss evangelism and try to hold people accountable that way. There can be different ways of approaching this, but it is important for us to create a standard that we want to be obeying the Great Commission within our churches.
- Biblical foundation:
 - Matthew 28: "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"
 - The 59 "one another's" of Scripture:
http://storage.cloversites.com/wakarusamissionarychurch/documents/59one_another_scriptures.pdf

4) Everyone Uses Their Gifts

- A WAC church deeply values every part of the body contributing (Eph 4:15-16) to build up the body with the unique gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:7). This will play out in a few ways within a WAC church:
 - a) Our gatherings are very participatory, where we regularly expect people to contribute in meaningful ways. See 1 Cor 14:26 for an example of this in the early church. We are good with one of the leaders giving a teaching, but we prefer for it to not be so long that it takes up a very large portion of the gathering and therefore minimizes the time for people to contribute and share. The leaders in the church should see one of their bigger responsibilities in the gathering as one who draws people out to engage, use their gifts, and practice love with one another.
 - b) We desire to see people use their gifts to build up the kingdom of God in all of life, not just gatherings. This looks like intentionally empowering people in different ways to bring their gifts, passions, and skills to see the church thriving in what God has called us to be. This can look like evangelists thinking intentionally about activating the church into opportunities to share Jesus. There will be some people who will love to host social functions. There will be others who organize prayer/worship times. There will be others who want to do things to shape the kids in a meaningful way. And there are many other examples. Far too often

leadership has been viewed as something we do to the people rather than supporting and encouraging them to become activated. We want to emphasize the activation of various members in the body. Ideally each member would be aware of tangible ways that they contribute their gifts to bless the body.

- Biblical foundation:
 - Ephesians 4:15-16
 - 1 Corinthians 12:
 - 1 Corinthians 14:26

5) Multiplication of Leaders & Churches

- Multiplication of Leaders: A We Are Church has a consistent goal of developing and empowering new leaders for the church in various forms, but with a large emphasis on elders.
 - Jesus placed a very high emphasis on investing in his twelve disciples, releasing them into ministry, and preparing them for when He would be gone. So often in the church, however, we have allowed other things to push our focus away from leadership development. There are two specific ways where our practice of “simple gatherings” can help us here:
 - a) When we are committed to being more simple, it helps us focus on people over programs, services, budgets, etc.
 - b) When we are committed to a simpler expression of the church, it means that godly, faithful people can lead even if they don’t have a lot of leadership experience, formal training, and professional type skills. The more complicated the structure/gatherings, the more likely the expectation for a leader to be skilled and professional. This is not as reproducible.
 - Our hope is to see different types of leadership roles in the church. Paul’s mention of five different leadership gifts in Ephesians 4:11 should highlight the importance of a variety of different gifts functioning in different ways within the church. We have noticed a tendency in our years here, however, to just focus on the pastoral type role in the church, putting every leader into the same exact role as others. The reality is that we need different godly leaders functioning in slightly different ways within the body so that we would be complete. If we neglect or ignore certain gifts, we will see the body become lopsided.
 - We are committed to developing strong elders. A strong elder team overseeing the church is paramount to a sustainable, healthy church long term. For this reason there should be great intentionality in how elders are established. It shouldn’t be fast or hasty. Godly character is displayed over time. People should be functioning in roles of leadership for a while before they are considered to be an elder so that faithfulness can be displayed.

- Multiplication of Churches: A We Are Church will seek to multiply in some form as the church grows numerically, rather than letting the church get so big that it moves away from the value of Loving Families and the practice of Our Gatherings are Small and Simple.
 - The primary goals for multiplication are:
 - a) We want to push ourselves to not get too comfortable with our current group, keeping the focus on reaching new people and bringing them into an intimate family.
 - b) We want to give new people opportunities to lead, otherwise leadership will bottleneck on a few who are always leading and thus creating complacency.
 - c) We want to preserve the healthily small fellowships in our churches, so multiplication is necessary when the church grows numerically.
 - This practice does not mean that churches need to multiply consistently in order to be in good standing as a We Are Church. We have experienced some seasons where we multiply a lot and some seasons where multiplication happens very infrequently.
 - We Are Church's can multiply in various different ways. Most common has been to split the group in half, dispersing leaders among the two groups, preferably giving the new group a strong leadership team to support them. Another approach is to send out a more missional team, potentially with the current leader (because he has more experience) leading that missional team. Other approaches are acceptable if they preserve the intentions laid out in our practices.
- Biblical foundation:
 - 2 Timothy 2:1-2: "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."
 - Titus 1:5: "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you"
 - Titus 1:6-9: "if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound] doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."
 - Luke 10:1: "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go."
 - 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- Luke 8:
 - We see in Luke 8 how Jesus seemed to prioritize time and investment in His disciples more so than the crowds.

3: We Are Church Doctrine

We Are Church affirms and holds to the Nicene Creed.

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.
And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come. Amen.

Statement of Beliefs

1) The Bible

We believe the Bible is the inspired, authoritative, living, eternally reliable Word of God, equally in all parts, and without error in its original manuscript and our primary and authoritative source of revelation from God, superior to conscience and reason, though not contrary to reason. Therefore, the Bible is our final authority for faith and practice and is necessary for our daily lives as it continually points us toward the person of Jesus. *[2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Hebrews 4:12]*

2) The Godhead

We believe that the one true God exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these, being one God, are equal in deity, power, and glory. We believe that God not only created the world but also now upholds, sustains, governs, and providentially directs all that exists and that he will bring all things to their proper consummation in Christ Jesus to the glory of his name. We believe that God has exhaustive foreknowledge of all future events, including the free choices of all moral agents, both angelic and human, that he hears and answers prayer, and that he saves from sin and death all who come to him through Jesus Christ *[Isaiah 40-48; Psalm 104; Psalm 139; Matthew 10:29-31; 28:19; Acts 17:24-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 1:1-14, Ephesians 1:9-12; 4:4-6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6]*.

We believe in God the Father, Creator of all things visible and invisible. *[Colossians 1:15-16]*

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, who came into the world to reveal the Father and was the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. Jesus Christ was the Creator of everything, for by Him all things were made. We further believe that in Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form and that He was very-God and very-Man. *[John 1:1-2, 14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 7:37-38]*

We believe in Jesus Christ's pre-existence, incarnation, virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, substitutionary and atoning death, bodily resurrection, bodily ascension into heaven, exaltation, present rule at the right hand of God, coming personal return in power and great glory and everlasting Kingdom and dominion. *[Acts 1:11; Acts 3:19-21; Daniel 7:14; Revelation 20:4]*

We acknowledge His Lordship—that Jesus Christ is Lord over all things in heaven, on earth and under the earth. *[Philippians 2:9-10]*

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His present ministry, His indwelling, His empowering, His impartation of gifts for today and His transforming power in the lives of all believers. *[1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14]*

3) Man and Salvation

We believe man was created by a direct and immediate act of God. [*Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:4*]

We believe man, by transgression, fell from the state of righteousness and holiness in which he was first created into total spiritual depravity, a state of death in trespasses and sins in which he is held as a slave of sin and an enemy of God. As such, he is unable to attain divine righteousness by his own efforts but must be redeemed and delivered by the power of the gospel. [*Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4*]

We believe repentance and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ are an integral part of God's work of justification of the believer. Through faith in the shed blood of Christ, he or she is justified and made a partaker in the death of Christ. [*Romans 5:1, 9*]

We believe it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. [*Ephesians 2:8-9*]

We further believe the emphasis for a continuous walk in grace should be on demonstrating righteousness and purity of heart, believing in the keeping power of God, walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, living a lifestyle that demonstrates the character, standards and convictions of Jesus Christ and not being conformed to the world. [*Jude 24; Romans 8:25; Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 4:1-5; Romans 12:1-2*]

We believe the Holy Spirit reveals and convicts people of sin, and we are responsible to repent of that sin and respond with obedience. [*2 Corinthians 7:10; Psalm 51; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25; Romans 1:18-32; Matthew 9:12-13*]

We believe that in the final judgment, which will accompany the return of Christ, every person will give an account to God of every aspect of this earthly life. Unbelievers will be separated from God for eternity in hell. Believers will experience the final resurrection and live eternally with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth. [*1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15*]

4) The Church

We believe the Church is both universal and local. All who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone form the Church, in unity with all believers throughout history. Yet the church is also local, with believers gathering in a committed community, submitted to the authority of Christ, and under the leadership of local elders. [*Ephesians 1:22-23*]

Scripture describes the Church as:

- the Body of Christ [*Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 1:9-10; Ephesians 1:22-23*]
- the household of God [*Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26-4:7; Ephesians 2:11*]
- the temple of God [*1 Corinthians 3:9-17; Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10*]
- God's chosen people [*Romans 11:17; Galatians 4:28-31; Ephesians 2:19*]

This language is intimate and reveals Jesus' commitment to and care for His people. Furthermore, the Church is God's instrument for revealing His purpose and the fullness of Jesus on earth for His glory. [*Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 1:23*]

We believe in the Lord's Supper and believer's water baptism as acts of our obedience and a testimony of our faith. Though they are not a means of salvation, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer when acted upon in faith within the local church. Both of these ordinances are only for believers in Jesus. [*Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, Matthew 28:18-20*]

5) Marriage, Family, & Sexuality

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God since both are created in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the Church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his companion in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. [*Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 2:20-25; Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 5:25; Ephesians 5:24; Genesis 2:20, 21; Titus 2:4, 5; Psalm 139:13-15*]

We Are Church stands in agreement with the clear teaching of Scripture, which we hold as the final authority, as well as the nearly unanimous teaching of the Church since the New Testament era and the majority of Christians around the world today in affirming the following: God-ordained marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. Sexual activity is a gift to be enjoyed solely within the context of marriage. Extra-marital sexual activity, homosexuality, pornography and other forms of sexually explicit media fall outside of the boundaries God placed on sexual behavior. Regarding the topic of homosexuality, We Are Church has consistently upheld a stance of clarity and compassion. Clarity that the practice of homosexuality is sinful, and compassion toward those who sin sexually, experience sexual confusion or deal with unwanted sexual desires. [*Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 7:21-22, Acts 15:20, Romans 1:22-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, 1 Timothy 1:8-11*]

Distinctive Beliefs:

1) Equality of Men and Women with Complementary Functions

We affirm the equality of men and women, and we encourage female leadership in a wide variety of ministries. We believe local churches are to be overseen by biblically qualified male elders who empower the gifts of both men and women. More specifically, we do not believe a woman is meant to be in a position of spiritual authority over a man. Different leadership structures will vary, and we allow for freedom in various outworkings of women's roles in the church, provided that a woman is not in a position of spiritual authority over a man.

We also believe in male headship in homes where both a husband and a wife are present. These leadership functions are to be carried out with a humble, Christ-like servant leadership attitude and a posture of mutual submission out of reverence for Jesus as Lord.

Gen. 2:4-25; Mark 10:35-45; John 13:1-16; Acts 2:16-21; 18:26; Gal. 3:28; Philip. 4:2-3; I Tim. 2:11-3:15; Titus 1:5-9; Eph. 5:18-33

2) Continuation of the Gifts

We believe that the ministry of the Spirit in signs and wonders continues to be as broad, tangible, and powerful among believers today as it was in the early church. We also believe that all the biblical gifts of the Spirit continue to be distributed by the Spirit today; that these gifts are divine provisions central to spiritual growth and effective ministry; and that these gifts are to be eagerly desired, faithfully developed, and lovingly exercised according to biblical guidelines.

John 14:12; Acts 2:14-21; 4:29-30; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 12:28-31; 14:1-33; Galatians 3:1-5

4: We Are Church Governance

Scripture describes the church as the Body of Christ, with Jesus Himself as the Head. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, filled with God's presence and with Christ as the cornerstone. The church is not a human institution, but rather is the household of God the Father, submitted to the lordship of Jesus, and constantly led by the Holy Spirit.

These great theological truths—like all good theology—are more than just a statement. They must be lived out in real life. This raises big questions: How should the church organize and operate? How does the church submit to Christ and the leadership of the Spirit? What is the role of human leaders?

The Bible is clear on the theological reality, but the application in a particular cultural context can be tricky. The conversation describes polity, or church governance, and it can get complex because there is no clear consensus either biblically or in church history regarding how church leadership should be structured. Instead of a specific model, we see consistent themes that are represented in historic forms of church governance: episcopal (bishop/apostle led), presbyterian (elder-led), and congregational (member led).

We see merit and biblical support in each of these approaches and seek to incorporate elements accordingly. Ultimately, Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Holy Spirit is the One who leads. All forms of human governance have one goal: to follow Him. We recognize that any model can become corrupted by the sin of its human agents. Likewise, God can move through any model of church leadership. More than perfecting a “model” we instead seek to be people who live fully submitted to Him, and we trust that the Spirit will work through even a broken vessel.

The We Are Church model:

1. Local churches are elder-governed because we believe that no one person is ever provided with complete revelation, and that we need one another to discern God's will. We seek to establish mature (1 Tim 1:1-7) and diversely gifted elder teams (Eph 4:7-16) who will be responsible for overseeing the church as it follows the leadership of the Spirit (Acts 14:23). Church leadership should resemble the leadership of Jesus (Phil 2:1-11, John 13:1-20).
2. Local churches seek to empower the whole congregation in the various spiritual gifts for the work of the ministry because we believe that God imparts His gifts to each person, and that each person has a part to play in God's purposes (Acts 2:17-18, 1 Cor 14:26, Eph 4:7-16, 1 Peter 4:10).
3. Local churches are accountable to an external support elder board for both counsel and to preserve the unity of the church's leadership because we recognize that sometimes

elders get bogged down in conflict, sin, or a dispute regarding direction (Acts 15:1-2). The outside support elder board is comprised of leaders within CI Network who regularly pray for and speak into the life of the church. They are empowered to resolve disputes among the elders when it becomes apparent that the church is at an impasse. They are also there to help guide within the culture of CI Network as a whole: values, practices, doctrine, etc.

A few practical implications:

- Elders are responsible for the doctrine, values, vision & direction, church discipline, and unity in the church. They are an example to the church through the integrity of their life, they shepherd the church through pastoral care, and they lead the church by seeking the Holy Spirit in prayer regarding their responsibilities.
- Elders carry their authority in unity together as a team. We encourage elders to strive for “consent decision-making.” This is not consensus—our model encourages healthy discussion and even debate, but ultimately asks the group to mutually submit to one another. In other words, one elder may have a different perspective or preference, but they will submit to the other elders and represent a unified leadership to the church. In the event that an elder cannot consent to a decision, the elders will ask the external board to facilitate a process to bring the team back into unity.
- Within We Are Church, the elders have the option to appoint a “first among equals” among the elders who would serve in a more traditional “lead pastor” or “lead elder” role. This leader would provide meaningful leadership to the church and elders, while at the same time submitting to the elders and not able to overrule them.
- Members do not have a formal “vote”, but elder teams are strongly encouraged to include members in decision-making processes by recognizing that the purpose of ministry is to empower the whole church, and that the Holy Spirit speaks through the whole church.
- In cases where there is more than one elder, there should be a designated elder or two who will function as the representative(s) of their local church to the broader We Are Church network and interact consistently with the Support Elder Board.
- External support elder boards have a primary responsibility to provide godly counsel and to provide pastoral care for the elders, with emphasis on the elder representative(s). In the event of an ongoing elder dispute or impasse, the external advisors will be fully empowered to mediate a process by which to restore the church to unity.
- We take Paul’s charge seriously to “not be hasty in the laying on of hands” when appointing elders. We strongly encourage We Are Churches to be slow in the process, and to seek counsel from other WAC elders before appointing an elder. This is one of

the benefits of the WAC Network, that we can lean on each other's wisdom and discernment in moments of big decisions.

5: Define the Relationship

In every serious relationship, there comes a point where it is necessary to define what exactly are the intentions, where is it headed, etc. This is what helps lead towards marriage and a family. In regard to church planting and establishing leadership/governance, there are a lot of similarities. It is good to be clear. So what exactly does it mean to be a We Are Church?

1. Name

It is up to each local church to decide on their name, but we encourage taking on the name We Are Church when possible. We do this for the sake of people looking for a church, people trying to understand which churches are formally connected to We Are Church, and to help contribute towards the ongoing feeling of family amongst the different churches.

The problem is that it can feel like “branding”, but our goal rather is to be family. We must fight for authenticity. We also want to be careful to not ever develop an “us vs. them” mentality. We Are Church is just one expression of the church among many other amazing ones. Though we want to be family together, we still want to fight for unity with other local churches near us and the larger body of Christ as a whole.

2. Relationship

We Are Church. We are not a denomination. There is not a group of people somewhere who “own” all of the churches. Each of these churches have local leadership and are autonomous. The nature of these relationships are more similar to a family. They depend on love, trust, time, and longevity, among other things.

3. Adding We Are Churches

- Local Planting:

Local We Are Churches have freedom to multiply or church plant within their own local context, given these realities:

1. The new church will continue under the authority of the local elders and is within reasonable distance to be overseen by those elders relationally.
2. The leader of that new church will still be meaningfully connected to the rest of the local WAC leadership through trainings and relationships.
 - There should at least be two formal trainings/meetings a month; in person is ideal, but Zoom is also good.
3. The leader of the new church is qualified, based on character, to be leading.

- **Non-Local Planting:**
Any planting of a church does not qualify as a “Local Plant” if it doesn’t meet all 4 points above. As a “Non-Local Plant”, this church would not be a We Are Church unless they go through the process with the WAC Global Leadership Team. Local WACs do not have the authority to bring a person or church into the WAC Network outside of their own local network.

4. Accountability

With being a We Are Church there will be a certain level of accountability to the things mentioned throughout this document.

The local leadership of a church would be deciding to remove themselves from being a We Are Church if they were to:

- a) Consciously deviate from any of the values, practices, or doctrines of We Are Church.
 - We say “consciously” because there will always be ways that we are not perfectly fulfilling the values and practices. The question is really a matter of desire. If there is a point where the local leadership no longer desires, for example, to have small and simple gatherings or to see everyone being discipled, then that would be a point of conversation about leaving the We Are Church network.
- b) Consistently be disengaged relationally from other We Are Church’s.
 - The goal is for there to be interconnected relationships among leaders, churches, etc. This will play out in different ways such as conferences, Zoom calls, and other opportunities to build relationships. If it becomes clear that a church is simply carrying the name of We Are Church but not interested in meaningful connection, there could be a time to move on from the network. This would not be an abrupt decision, but would only come after multiple conversations.
- c) Ignore the direction of the support elder board when there is a conflict amongst the elders, or if the elder board is deemed unhealthy or unfit by the support elder board and no resolution is able to be agreed upon.
 - It is important that the local church have support in times of trouble, and we want to help ensure that the support elder board can truly support in those times. If they are pushed to the side when they are really needed, this would be of great concern. Also if it becomes clear that the local elder board is not healthy and can’t resolve their issues, it could become time for the church to move away from the We Are Church network.

5. Unity

We strongly oppose the “us against them” mindset towards the body of Christ. Our hope is that establishing We Are Church in other areas doesn’t lead these churches to feel connection with the body of Christ in their area as less important. We believe it is important to be connected with other local churches in our areas for the sake of unity.

6. Giving

We believe it is important that We Are Church’s think not only about their local body, but that they contribute towards the support of churches in other areas as well. Therefore we ask that churches pray about and decide on a monthly amount to support the global ministry efforts of We Are Church, with the recommended amount being 10% of the incoming giving locally.