

WE ARE  
SOŋa  
WAXAHACHIE

*...in Waxahachie as it is in heaven.*

# WE ARE SOM&a WAXAHACHIE

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## THE VISION & VALUES OF SOMA WAXAHACHIE

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# WELCOME!

We are glad you have chosen to learn more about Soma Waxahachie!

This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since people from many different church backgrounds may have a desire to become members of Soma, this class is designed to clearly explain the “who” and “what” of our church.

We live in the age of Consumerism. Most people (even those claiming to follow Jesus) treat the church like a buffet. We’ll take a few items from this church and a few items from that one. All the while we are missing the primary point. We are meant to give our lives away to the body of Christ, the Church. It is unthinkable that an arm would separate and live apart from the body. It is unthinkable that a finger would find purpose disconnected from the hand. However, the unthinkable occurs often in our culture.

Many people calling themselves Christians have separated themselves from the blessings found in the body of Christ. The parts of the body find meaning as they connect to one another. The parts of the body find purpose as they work with one another. The metaphor holds true with your life (a part/a member) and the church (the body). As you give your life away in sacrificial service to the local church, purpose and meaning follow. Our call as followers of Christ is to sacrificially commit our lives to building the Kingdom of Heaven through the local church. We invite you into the movement! We invite you into a radical engagement of life and mission, soul and gifts! We invite you into the body of Christ.

We want you to know up front that Soma Waxahachie longs to be a movement centered on the extension of God’s glory. We do not exist for the sake of entertainment, but for the sake of eternity. We are fighting not with guns, but with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our enemy is real and his tactics are subtle. His weapons of sin and rebellion are devastating. We fight not for land, position, power or wealth; we fight for the glory of God and the joy of men and women.

How is this satisfying? That’s what we want you to discover.

Enjoying his grace!  
Soma Waxahachie

# THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

THE PERFECT CHURCH WOULD BE? (describe it in the box below)

## WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT

**1. THE CHURCH IS NOT A BUILDING.**

**2. THE CHURCH IS NOT AN EVENT.**

**3. THE CHURCH IS NOT AN AUDIENCE.**

*...the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*

—John 4:21, 23-24

It may come as a surprise to some but of the hundred or so times the word *church* is used in the New Testament it never once refers to a building or an event.

Christianity was completely unique in the world from which it emerged because it was the first religion to be practiced without a temple, with no sacred spaces, no sacrifices, no relics, and no priestly class.<sup>1</sup> So as Christians attempting to understand what it means to be part of a

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<sup>1</sup> "It can be rightly said that Christianity was the first non-temple-based religion ever to emerge."  
Viola, Frank. *Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices*. Tyndale Momentum, 11.

church, we should be interested to find out how and why our faith and practice came to be so associated with things that happen in a place that we call *church*.

Let's find out.

The word *church* that appears in our English translations of the Bible comes from the Greek word **ἐκκλησία**, or *ekklesia*. Ekklesia literally translated means *called out*; it comes from the Greek preposition *ek*, which means *out* (it's where we get our word *exit*), and from the Greek verb *kaleo*, which means *call* (it's where we get our word *call*).

Right about now you might be asking how the word *called-out* came to be translated as church. That's a great question.

An *ekklesia* is simply a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place.<sup>2</sup> Simply put, it's an assembly, a gathering of people who are summoned out of their normal routine to be assembled for a particular purpose.<sup>3</sup>

With that understanding in mind, we discover that the *Ekklesia*, as it is most often used in the New Testament,<sup>4</sup> is never used to describe a place or an event but a group of people called out by God from the rest of the world for a special reason.<sup>5</sup>

In the centuries following the ministries of Jesus and his Apostles, the *Ekklesia* of Christ would eventually come to be associated with the places where his disciples gathered for fellowship and worship. Paul taught that the *Ekklesia* is the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 3:16) and the Temple of the Lord (Eph 2:21), and it wasn't long before the places where the *Ekklesia* assembled acquired those very same designations. From that point forward, the building was no longer called a house or a hall where the *Ekklesia* gathered, instead it came to be known itself as the House of the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>“ἐκκλησία,” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, paragraph 3468.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Acts 19, the city official was reminding the angry crowd that there's was a proper time and place (an *ekklesia*) to handle their grievances.

<sup>4</sup> We actually find that particular aspect of the word used in Acts 19:39, where an official from the city of Ephesus quiets an unruly crowd upset that Paul's preaching had negatively affected the city's idol-making industry. He says, *“If the craftsmen have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular ekklesia [or assembly].”*

<sup>5</sup> The *ekklesia* in the New Testament correlates to the “Assembly of the LORD” in the Old Testament (Num 16:3; 20:4; Deut 23:2-4; Mic 2:5; 1 Chr 28:8). The Hebrew word *qahal* (קָהָל) is translated as *ekklesia* in the Septuagint –the Greek translation of the Old Testament scriptures.

<sup>6</sup> This is not too dissimilar from how we speak colloquially of the houses where people live today, when we refer to them by the same name of the people who stay there. While we know full well that a house is not a family, we often call the house where the Smith's live, the Smith's.

And this is where we finally discover how we arrived at our English word *church*. House of the Lord, *kuriakon doma* in Greek,<sup>7</sup> was eventually translated from Greek into Proto-Germanic as *kirika*, which was in turn imported into Old English as *circe*.<sup>8</sup> And that's how we came to the modern English word *church*.

In 1604, when King James commissioned the Anglican Church to produce an official English translation of the Bible, the translators translated *ekklesia* as *church* rather than *congregation* or *assembly*.<sup>9</sup> And since the King James Version was *the* authorized version of the Bible for English speaking people everywhere, *church* became fixed in our language and use. We've been stuck with it ever since.

What's the big deal, does it really matter if we translate an ancient Greek word, like *ekklesia*, as *church* rather than *assembly* or *congregation*? Yes and no.

It doesn't matter if our thinking is sophisticated enough to pick up on the nuance of our English usage of the word *church*, understanding everything that we've just read. However, it matters a great deal if our minds are contaminated with the idea that *church* is merely a place that we go or an event we participate in. If in reality we're a special group of people who are called out of the world to be gathered to Jesus, then there are consequences associated with misunderstanding that. *Church* becomes a place that we go or something that we do for an hour and a half on Sunday and not who we've been rescued to be. We consistently and continuously conform our behavior to align with the things we believe. That's as true for wrong beliefs as it is for right beliefs. And we want our hearts and minds to be properly informed regarding the church.

So if we are to use the word *church*, we must use it carefully, appropriately and accurately.

*Church* is who we are, not what we do or where we go. That's why we at Soma prefer to speak of "*gathering with the church*" rather than "*going to church*". And it's why you'll often hear us say, "*We don't go to church, we are the Church.*" For us to say "*we go to church*", would be like saying "*we go to house*" when what we really mean is that we're going to spend time with our family.

With that groundwork laid, we will now turn our attention to what (or who) the Church is.

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<sup>7</sup> Or, "house belonging to the Lord"

<sup>8</sup> church (n.) — <https://www.etymonline.com/word/church>

<sup>9</sup> The likely reason for their preference of *church* over *assembly* or *congregation* can be inferred from our understanding that the Anglican Church (like the Roman Catholic Church from whom they'd recently separated) is a State run church. And because the political power of the King was inextricably tied to his role as the Head of the Church of England, the translators paid deference to his authority by removing any possible confusion about who was in charge.

# WHAT THE CHURCH IS

## 1. THE CHURCH IS A UNIQUE PEOPLE RESERVED BY GOD FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE.

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

—1 Peter 2:9

In the same way that the nation of Israel was called out by God as his chosen people, to be a holy and distinct people, set apart for God's glory, for righteousness, and to be a blessing to all nations, so too the Church is also called out and chosen by God for these same purposes.

## 2. THE CHURCH IS A TEMPLE.

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

—1 Corinthians 3:16

Arthur Wallis writes, "In the Old Testament, God had a sanctuary for his people; in the New, God has his people as a sanctuary."<sup>10</sup> In the Old Testament God limited his presence to one location, the Temple. In the Gospels he limited himself to the person of Jesus. And from Acts on through to Revelation, God makes his dwelling in, with and through his people.

## 3. THE CHURCH IS A BODY.

*And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

—Ephesians 1:22-23

This body language is used in two ways by Paul. Here in Ephesians, Paul indicates that Jesus, in the same way that he once lived out his ministry in his own physical body, now works his ministry out through his Church by the power of His Spirit.

Elsewhere, in 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul speaks of the multi-functioning interdependent individual persons who constitute the Church as members of the singular Body of Christ, each being graced with differing gifts, and given to one another for the building up of the whole Church.

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<sup>10</sup> Wallis, Arthur. *The Radical Christian*. Cityhill Publishing, 83.

#### 4. THE CHURCH IS UNIVERSAL.

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

—Revelation 7:9-10

The Church is God's holy congregation, inhabited by everyone who has been gathered and will be gathered by God, throughout redemptive history.

#### 5. THE CHURCH IS LOCAL.

*Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— and all the brothers who are with me,*

*To the churches of Galatia:*

—Galatians 1:1-2

The local church is a community of Jesus' disciples living and serving in proximity to one another, who have been rescued by grace and made alive by the Spirit. "In obedience to Scripture they organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and Communion, and are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy."<sup>11</sup>

## HOW GOD RELATES TO HIS CHURCH

#### 1. THE CHURCH IS PERSONAL TO JESUS.

*He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.*

—Acts 9:4-5

If the Church is Jesus' Body, then Jesus experiences the abuse, insult and injury that comes against the individual members of his Body.

#### 2. THE CHURCH IS SPECIAL TO JESUS.

*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the*

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<sup>11</sup> Driscoll, Mark & Breshears, Gerry. *Vintage Church*. Re: Lit, 38-39.



*church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

—Ephesians 5:26-27

Jesus loves his church as a husband loves his wife. He has committed himself wholly to the care, holiness, and glorification of the people he died to save.

## NINE DEFINING MARKS OF THE CHURCH

1: Regenerate church membership (Acts 2:38-41)

2: Qualified leadership (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1:5-9)

3: Preaching and worship (2 Timothy 4:2)

4: Rightly administered sacraments (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11)

5: Spirit unity (Theological Unity, Relational Unity, Philosophical Unity, Missional Unity)

6: Holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 18; 1 Corinthians 5; Proverbs 27:17)

7: Practice spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:7-16)

8: The Great Commandment to love (Matthew 22:34-40)

9: The Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## OUR CULTURE AND THE CHURCH.

- The culture currently trends toward **consumerism** not **commitment**.
- Consumerism causes people to **date** the church, when God wants you to **marry** the church.
- Church membership calls you to **give your life away** to the local church.

## REASONS WHY WE ARE COMMITTED TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

REASON 1: Church membership is implied in church gatherings.

The New Testament has no category for people calling themselves Christians who are not connected to a local church.

REASON 2: Church membership is implied in church discipline.

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you... I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler - not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."*

—1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 9-13

REASON 3: Church membership is implied with church leadership.

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

—Hebrews 13:17

*So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you.*

—1 Peter 5:1-2

REASON 4: Church membership is implied in record keeping.

Acts 2 - numerical record. 1 Timothy 5 - a record of widows. In Acts 6, there were elections. In Hebrews 13, there's accountability. In Romans 16:1-16, there is an awareness of who the church members are.

REASON 5: Church membership is implied in the analogy of Christ's body.

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*

—1 Corinthians 12:12, 18-20

REASON 6: Church membership is clearly taught.

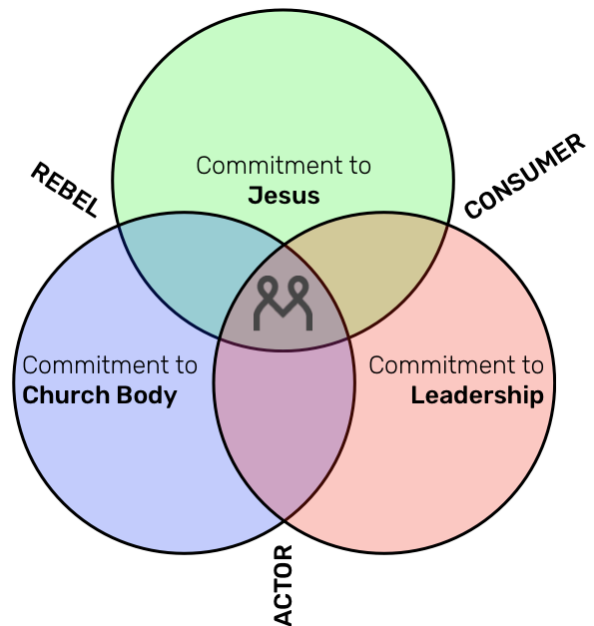
*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

—Hebrews 13:17

## WHAT IS A CHURCH MEMBER?

A CHURCH MEMBER HAS THREE COMMITMENTS:

- **TO JESUS:** (I believe) in Jesus, and pursuing Jesus, gospel-centered heart, essential beliefs, sound doctrine.
- **TO THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP:** (I support) the mission, vision, values of the church.
- **TO THE CHURCH BODY:** (I belong) to a Missional Community, serving, giving to the body.



## **THE CONSEQUENCE OF MISSING ONE COMMITMENT:**

- REBELS want God and the fellowship of His congregation but doesn't feel committed to the Mission, Vision, Values of the local church or have any real submission to the elders.
  - CONSUMERS want what the church has to offer but doesn't really want the church. They are a relational one-way street. They expect the church to provide everything to them that they have personally withheld from the church.
  - ACTORS want to check off all the organizational boxes in order to demonstrate their legalistic commitment to the church while having little to no connection with her head, Jesus Christ. This is the religious person, the elder brother, the Pharisee.
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**In your own words, define the word *CHURCH*.**

**How does our definition of *CHURCH* differ from the way it is commonly defined by our religious culture / secular culture?**

**Briefly describe the significance of the metaphors of *BODY* and *TEMPLE* used in the New Testament to describe the Church.**

**Define a church member.**

# THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? (define it in the box below)

THE GOSPEL IS NOT

1. THIS
2. THAT
3. THIS AND THAT

THE GOSPEL IS

1. THIS

There are two ways of understanding the biblical story. The first is synchronically, or systematically.

*Synchronically* (the power of the cross) – the means of salvation

- God
- Sin
- Christ
- Salvation by grace through faith

*Diachronically* (the purpose of the cross) – the trajectory of salvation

- Creation
  - Fall
  - Redemption
  - Restoration
- 
- [Genesis 3:15 / 1 Corinthians 15:1–4](#)
  - [Genesis 12:3 / Galatians 3:8](#)
  - [Luke 24:44–47](#) (paying particular attention to verse 47)
  - [Matthew 4:23 / 24:14](#)
  - [Isaiah 49:6 / Psalm 67 / Matthew 5:14](#)
  - Genesis 1 / Revelation 22

**How do these verses shape your understanding of the gospel?**

**If you were asked to define the gospel of the kingdom, would your answer differ significantly from your answer to the original question?**



# THE NATURE OF THE MISSION

## WHAT IS THE MISSION?

*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.*

—Matthew 28:19-20

The Great Commission is a fine place to start answering this question, because Jesus' last words are indeed the first priority of the Church. However, starting there can put us in the unfortunate position of being told that we need to do something, without really understanding why we are supposed to do it. So before we answer the *what* of mission, we need to spend some time considering the *why*. Why has God created us and what are we here on earth to do?

But to answer that question, we are forced to take a step back and ask a second question. Whose mission is it anyway? And of course, the answer is God. It's God's mission.<sup>12</sup>

## THE MISSION OF GOD

*"It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission —God's mission."<sup>13</sup>*

—Christopher Wright

Jesus, as he teaches his disciples to pray, says, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:9-10). And Paul, in his letter to the disciples at Ephesus, writes, "[God revealed to us] the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10). So we have Jesus praying to his Father that his will would be accomplished on earth in the same way that it is accomplished in heaven; then we have Paul, teaching us that the Father's will is to unite all things in Christ and reunite everything in heaven and on earth that was torn apart through human rebellion and the fall.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Zondervan, 24.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God*. IVP, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Romans 8:19-23



This means that God's will for his creation (that is, his mission) is the restoration of all things. And as part of his mission God has called into existence a special people to participate with him in his relentless pursuit of setting the world to rights. So then, the church's mission flows out of the mission of God which precedes it.

*"Mission arises from the heart of God himself, and is communicated from his heart to ours."*<sup>15</sup>  
—John Stott

## **THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS.**

*All things* is a lot of things that need restoration. So it is helpful for us to think of all those things in four usable categories and figure out what part the church plays in their restoration, if any at all. The first is the restoration of the relationship between God and his people; the second is the restoration of human vocation, the third is the restoration of human relationships; and the fourth is the restoration of humanity's relationship with the physical world.

### CATEGORY 1: The Restoration of the God to Human Relationship

Humans were created by God for relationship with him.

*...then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

—Genesis 2:7

Human rebellion created a rift in the relationship between God and humans.

*He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*

—Genesis 3:24

In Christ, the relationship between God and humans that was severed through sin is restored.

*...just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*

—John 17:21-24

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<sup>15</sup> Stott, John. *The Contemporary Christian: An Urgent Plea for Double Listening*. IVP, 335.

## CATEGORY 2: The Restoration of Human Vocation

God created humans to rule over his creation and exercise his authority as creatures who bear his image. This speaks to the distinguished regal identity of every human.<sup>16</sup>

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

—Genesis 1:27

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion...”*

—Genesis 1:28

The glory of the image of God in each individual human is defaced because of their own sin.

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

—Romans 3:23

Jesus, the perfect human and ideal image of God, has recovered the authority that was lost by Adam through sin.

*[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*

—Colossians 1:15

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...*

—Matthew 28:18

Both the broken image of God and the divine right to reign as human image bearers of God is recovered in Jesus Christ.

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*

—2 Corinthians 3:18

*For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*

—Romans 5:17

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<sup>16</sup> *Image of God* language is not unique to Scripture. It was common in the Ancient Near East for kings to refer to themselves as the image of the chief god that ruled over their kingdoms. King Tut, for instance, his name (actually Tutankhamen) meant “Tut the image of Amun” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amun> ). Amun Ra, the Sun god, was the chief god among the Egyptian pantheon of gods. This fusion of gods and kings during this period was to show that kings held a divine right to rule over the people and land in their kingdoms.

### CATEGORY 3: The Restoration of Human to Human Relationships

Humans were created for relationship with one another.

*Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone..."*

—Genesis 2:18

Sin created a rift in the relationships between humans.

*The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."*

—Genesis 3:12

*Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.*

—Genesis 4:8

In Christ, God has restored human relationships.

*[Jesus created] in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*

—Ephesians 2:15–16

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."*

—1 John 4:7–11

### CATEGORY 4: The Restoration of the Human to Creation Relationship

God created Adam from the dust of the earth<sup>17</sup> and commissioned him for work.

*then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

—Genesis 2:7

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<sup>17</sup> "In Hebrew there's a play on words. Adam (the man) is made from the adamah (the ground). It's a poetic way of saying that human has a symbiotic relationship with the earth itself." Comer, John Mark. *Garden City: Work, Rest, and the Art of Being Human*. Zondervan, 57.

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it keep it.*<sup>18</sup>

—Genesis 2:15

The creation was cursed when Adam abdicated his authority over it.<sup>19</sup>

*And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

—Genesis 3:17–19

The earth was created by Jesus, it is owned by Jesus, and it is being sustained by Jesus.<sup>20</sup>

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*

—Colossians 1:15–17

The old creation is passing away and the new creation has come.<sup>21</sup>

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

—2 Corinthians 5:17

With that understanding of God's mission established, we next turn our attention to the mission of God's people.

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<sup>18</sup> "To work and keep it" (לַעֲבֹדָה וּלְשָׁמְרָה) may also be translated as "to serve it and protect it". Adam failed in both regards when he allowed the serpent to remain in the garden after it began to deceive his wife.

Genesis 2:15, alongside 1:28, form what is often called the Cultural Mandate. That is, the commissioning of humans to create culture (civilization, arts, architecture, sciences) using the raw materials of the land.

<sup>19</sup> Laborious work and human hearts bent toward laziness and greed has introduced the clear and present potential for significant abuse of the environment that God gave humans to manage, serve, and protect on his behalf.

<sup>20</sup> "...if the earth we live on is the property of Jesus, belonging to him by right of creation and redemption, we cannot separate our personal submission to Jesus as Lord from how we think about, and how we act upon, the earth. Godly use and careful stewardship of the resources of the earth, along with specific ecological advocacy and action, are legitimate dimensions of Christian mission. Christian mission cannot exclude our primal human mission, which was to exercise godly rule over creation by serving and keeping it (Gen. 1:26–28, combined with Gen. 2:15)." Wright, Christopher. <http://www.loimission.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chris-Wright-IntegralMissionandtheGreatCommission.pdf>, 16–17. Sep. 2018.

<sup>21</sup> The new creation, prophesied by Isaiah 65:17–25, 66:22 and fulfilled in Revelation 21:1–2, while it has not yet been fully consummated and established on the earth (Rom. 8:19–22), it has been inaugurated by Jesus in his resurrection as the last Adam.

# THE MISSION OF JESUS

If the restoration of all things in Christ is the mission of God, then we need to understand what participation with Jesus looks like for us as his people and to what degree we cooperate with him in his restoration of all that is broken. To establish these we need to first understand the mission of Jesus and how we are governed by him.

## **JESUS IS THE KING OVER A KINGDOM.**

*Jesus said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

—Matthew 16:15-17

Christ is not Jesus' last name. Christ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word meshiach, which means *anointed* or *the Anointed One*. Kings were anointed with olive oil in Jewish society as a symbol of the Spirit's power that rested upon them, thereby giving them the authority to rule and reign over the kingdom of Israel. This is where we get the word messiah. So then, Messiah and Christ are synonyms for king. And that is who Jesus is. He is the fulfilled promise of the long expected Redeemer and King of Israel. And as King, he is ruling and reigning over his kingdom and through his redeemed people scattered across the globe.<sup>22</sup>

When Jesus ascended from earth to the right hand of his Father in heaven, we should not confuse his departure for his absence. We should rather understand his ascension as his enthronement as King over heaven and earth. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and as the exalted King over all creation he is ruling and reigning over his Kingdom of Heaven that is now present here on earth.

## **THE CHURCH ARE THE CITIZENS OF JESUS' KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH.**

If Jesus is King over his Kingdom of Heaven then everyone who has been born from above as his new creation people are citizens of his kingdom.<sup>23</sup>

*[The Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

—Colossians 1:13-14

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<sup>22</sup> *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.* —Galatians 6:14-16, NIV 2011

<sup>23</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.* —John 3:3  
The Kingdom of God, used here by John, and the Kingdom of Heaven, used elsewhere by the Matthew, are interchangeable names for the same reality. We should be careful not to confuse the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven for heaven, the place where God dwells. The Kingdom of Heaven is the sovereign rule and reign of Jesus on earth.

## **KINGDOM CITIZENS WORK THE WILL OF THE KING IN THE NAME OF THE KING, FOR THE GLORY OF THE KING, AND THE ADVANCE OF HIS GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH.**

Everything that God's people do, it is done in the name of the King.

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

—Colossians 3:17

Everything that God's people do, it is done for the glory of the King.

*...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

—1 Corinthians 10:31

Everything that God's people do, it is done to advance the King's kingdom.

*As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.<sup>24</sup>*

—John 17:18

*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.<sup>25</sup>*

—Matthew 16:18

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

—Matthew 24:14

## **THE KING'S MISSION IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.**

If the mission of God is the restoration of all things; and his mission is being accomplished by the arrival of King Jesus and through the advancing of his kingdom on earth; then the mission of God and the mission of Jesus are being worked out through God's new creation people, the Church.

How then do we, as God's people and the citizens of Jesus' kingdom, participate with our God and King in his relentless pursuit to set the world to rights?

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<sup>24</sup> And [Jesus] went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. —Matthew 4:23

<sup>25</sup> Notice Jesus' words closely here: The work of the Church is done on earth, but there is agreement in heaven on what is being done. And the work that is accomplished is made possible because the keys of the *kingdom of heaven* have been given to the church.

# THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

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.*

—Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus' mandate for his people does not arrive at the end of his ministry without historical and theological context. And with our thinking now in alignment with those contexts, we may now attempt to construct a proper mission for the Universal Church globally and our church family locally.

## **SATURATING THE EARTH WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS AMONG EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN.**

There are three driving ideas embedded into this sentence that capture the essence of God's mission for his Church.

### PART 1: Saturating the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God

In his prophecy, Habakkuk looked forward to a day when the entire earth would be saturated with knowledge of the God's glory.<sup>26</sup>

*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

—Habakkuk 2:14

Another way of expressing Habakkuk's prophecy would be to say that a day is coming when an intimate, experiential relationship with God will be inescapable. And the outward manifestation of his awesome power and glory will be perceptible to every person, from every family, in every tribe, among every nation across the globe.<sup>27</sup>

How is this going to happen?

### PART 2: by making disciples of Jesus

Where Habakkuk makes the promise that creation will one day be bathed in the knowledge of God's glory, Jesus gives the mandate for how it will be accomplished.

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<sup>26</sup> Looking forward to the New Testament we understand that Jesus is the glory of God manifest in flesh. (Heb. 1:3)

<sup>27</sup> See — Baker, David W. *Habakkuk*, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition; ed. D. A Carson et al.; Accordance electronic ed. IVP, 844.

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.*

—Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus is the exalted King of Israel who has been given the nations as his inheritance.<sup>28</sup> And based upon his authority as King over creation, he dispatches his disciples into the world to make disciples,<sup>29</sup> by announcing the good news of his kingdom and the forgiveness of sins.

### PART 3: among every nation under heaven.

Like Habakkuk, Isaiah also looked forward to a day when everyone everywhere would know the Lord. However, Isaiah is more explicit in his mention of the nations and their response to the root of Jesse.<sup>30</sup>

*For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.*

—Isaiah 11:9-10

It has been God's plan since the scattering that happened at Babel to bless all the families of the earth, to regather the nations throughout the world, and restore them back to himself.

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<sup>28</sup> Psalm 2:8, 22:27, 82:8, Hebrews 1:2

<sup>29</sup> For Jesus there are two vital functions included in the process of disciple-making: baptism and teaching –more on baptism later. For our purposes here, we will only focus on teaching disciples.

Since the commission was initially given to the disciples who were there with Jesus when he ascended into heaven, all that needs be done to figure out what Jesus meant by “teach them to observe all that I’ve commanded” is to look backward to see what Jesus taught his disciples; then to look forward to see how Jesus’ disciples taught their disciples.

Looking backward to Jesus’ ministry – Because the Great Commission is found in the Gospel of Matthew, we should look to this Gospel for the answers to our question.

Briefly, Matthew gives a significant amount of real estate in his Gospel to the subject of Jesus’ kingship, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the ethical demands of Jesus’ Kingdom. Therefore, we may infer that this was certainly part of what Jesus meant when he said, “...*teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.*”

Looking forward to the Apostolic ministry – And looking forward past the Great Commission into Acts and the Epistles we find far too much to practically address here. One passage will suffice.

*For I did not hold back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God.*

—Acts 20:27 NET

The significance here is that Luke shows us that Paul’s discipleship methodology included teaching his disciples the “*whole purpose of God*”. This language is too closely associated with the will and mission of God to be ignored.

Therefore, mature disciples should be not only be taught to observe the ethical commands of Jesus but also to understand the comprehensive restorative mission of God for the world.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus is the Root of Jesse, see Romans 15:12



# THE MISSION OF SOMA WAXAHACHIE

**SOMA EXISTS TO SATURATE WAXAHACHIE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS IN THE EVERYDAY NORMAL STUFF OF LIFE –IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD, AMONG EVERY RACIAL AND ETHNIC PEOPLE GROUP THAT CALLS OUR CITY HOME.**

The local mission of Soma Waxahachie exists as a microcosm and subset of the larger global mission of the Universal Church.

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**What would it look like if a group of people in Waxahachie began to live their lives together like they actually believed that this is exactly what they were created by God and saved by Jesus to do?**

**What affect would a church like this have on city like Waxahachie?**

**What sorts of things typically prevents a church from living like this and committing themselves to this mission?**

# THE NATURE OF A DISCIPLE

## WHAT A DISCIPLE IS NOT

**1. A DISCIPLE IS NOT SOMEONE WHO SELF-IDENTIFIES AS CHRISTIAN.**

**2. A DISCIPLE IS NOT AN EXPERT ON THE BIBLE.**

**3. A DISCIPLE IS NOT SOMEONE WHO ATTENDS A DISCIPLESHIP CLASS.**

While a disciple may do each of these things not everyone who does these things is a disciple. In other words, there are no disciples who are not also Christian, but there are people who call themselves Christian who are not disciples.

## WHAT A DISCIPLE IS

**1. A DISCIPLE IS A LEARNER.**

We get our word disciple from the Greek word μαθητής (mathētēs). It simply means, *a learner* or *a student*.<sup>31</sup>

Mathetes comes from the root word μάθημα (máthēma),<sup>32</sup> which means, *something that is learned* or *a lesson*. This root word also shapes another Greek word that you're already probably familiar with, μαθηματικός (máthēmatikós). Any guesses?

If you said mathematics, you're right! Sort of.

It is where we get our word *mathematics* but mathematikos does not mean arithmetic, algebra, geometry, etc., it means, *fond of learning*.<sup>33</sup>

For some of you, *fond of learning* and math should never be paired in the same sentence. But since we mentioned it, let's use learning mathematics as an analogy to help us think about what a disciple is.

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<sup>31</sup> a learner, pupil, disciple "μαθητής," Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, paragraph 6123.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=ma/qhma>. Sep. 2018.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=maqmatiko/s>. Sep. 2018.

When you entered kindergarten your teacher didn't expect much from you. At most, if you watched enough Sesame Street, you probably knew how to count from 1 to 10. And yet with time, by the end of the year, you were not only able to count 1, 2, 3..., but you learned to do something new with your numbers that you were not at first able to do, simple addition and subtraction.

What was it that you learned to do? Math, yes. But more than that, you learned to do math in the same exact way that your teacher did math.

You watched her take 3 beans from a group of 5 beans, leaving 2 beans behind. And all of a sudden, in that moment, her subtraction became your subtraction. In a very small way, you became just like your teacher. And whether you're aware of it or not, every time you take 3 from five, your kindergarten teacher is still speaking through you today.

So it was with the disciple-to-master relationships that we read about in the pages of Scripture,<sup>34</sup> with a couple obvious differences.

## **2. A DISCIPLE IS SOMEONE BECOMING LIKE THEIR MASTER.**

Disciples in the first century had two main objectives. The first was to be with their teacher. Wherever the teacher went, the disciple would go. He would walk with him, eat with him, sleep beside him, everything the teacher did, the disciple would do it too. So unless your kindergarten teacher was also your mom, this wouldn't have been your experience.

The second, which came as a result of the first, was for the disciple to become just like their teacher. As we said above, when you learned to do math in kindergarten you weren't just learning a new skill, but in a very small way your teacher deposited a little bit of herself into you. And in the process you became a little bit like her. The end goal of discipleship was much more than just that. It was not just the total transfer of knowledge from the teacher's head to the disciple's, but the total transformation of the disciple to become the mirror image of the teacher they followed.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Discipleship as a practice was not invented by the Jews. So far as we can tell, it was practiced in Greek culture long before it is found in the biblical text. It is likely that it was the practice was integrated into Judaism as a result of Hellenization.

<sup>35</sup> The first century philosopher Seneca appeals to the "living voice and intimacy of common life" of the disciple-teacher relationship of many different philosophers:

*Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno, if he had merely heard his lectures; he also shared in his life, saw into his hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words of Socrates.*

Seneca., *Epistles 1-65.*, Trans Richard M Gummere, Loeb Classical Library 75., pp. Epist. 6.5-6.6, p. 27-28.

The transformation was total. When a disciple took his teacher's yoke and put it on<sup>36</sup> (which was a first century Jewish way of saying that the disciple would learn, acquire, and practice the teacher's interpretation of the Law)<sup>37</sup> the disciple would begin to think like their teacher thought, speak like their teacher spoke, and live exactly like their teacher lived; with the goal of carrying their teacher forward into the next generation.

And so it was with Jesus and his disciples.

## WHAT A DISCIPLE OF JESUS IS

**A DISCIPLE OF JESUS IS SOMEONE WHO INCREASINGLY WORSHIPS JESUS, WHO IS CHANGED BY JESUS, AND WHO OBEY'S JESUS COMMANDS.**

There are three driving ideas embedded into this sentence that capture the essence of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

—Matthew 4:19

Notice these three important pieces of what Jesus says to Peter and Andrew at the beginning of his ministry.

Follow me  
I will make you  
Fishers of men

Next consider what has happened with these men by the end of Jesus' ministry.

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 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."*

—Matthew 28:16-20

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<sup>36</sup> Matthew 11:28-30

<sup>37</sup> The metaphor of a yoke, which in the OT commonly denoted social or political oppression (Gen 27:40; Exod 6:6-7; 1 Kgs 12:4-14; Isa 58:6, 9; Jer 28:2-14, etc.) and had a strongly pejorative sense, came to be used in later Jewish literature for the demands of the law upon people's obedience, usually understood in a positive sense, an obligation freely accepted by "putting on the yoke of the Torah."

France, R.T., *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT. Eerdmans, 448.

Matthew 4:19		Matthew 28:17-20		Result
<i>Follow me</i>	→	Worshipped	=	<u>Worships Jesus</u>
<i>I will make you</i>	→	Transformed	=	<u>Changed by Jesus</u>
<i>fishers of men</i>	→	Submitted	=	<u>Obeys Jesus' commands</u>

## WHO A DISCIPLE OF JESUS IS

### A DISCIPLE IS A CHILD, A SERVANT, AND A MISSIONARY.

*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.*

—Matthew 28:19-20

According to Jesus, disciple making occurs when two things happen: Baptism and equipping.

Baptism will be discussed more thoroughly below, however, for our purposes here we will only focus on a single aspect. Identity.

The Greek word βαπτίζω (bap-tid'-zo) means *immerse* and it's where we get our word baptism. Most of the time when we think about baptism we think of being immersed or submerged under the water. However, listen carefully to what Jesus actually says. He does not say to his disciples "*baptizing them in water*", he says, "*baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*". Disciples are baptized into the name of the triune God. And when we are immersed into his name we are given a new identity.

IDENTITY 1: Because we are baptized into the name of the Father, we are children. — If we are God's children, then the church is full of brothers and sisters. Therefore we're family.

IDENTITY 2: Because we are baptized into the name of the Son, we are servants. — Jesus is king and we are servants of his Kingdom.

IDENTITY 3: Because we are baptized into the name of the Spirit, we are missionaries. — The Father and the Son send the Spirit. Because he is sent, we live as sent people.

This is why you will often hear us speak of ourselves as a family of missionaries and servants.

We will now consider the second thing that happens in the disciple making process: Equipping.

# WHAT A DISCIPLE OF JESUS DOES

## THE END GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP IS TO BE WITH JESUS, TO BECOME LIKE JESUS, AND TO DO WHAT JESUS DID.<sup>38</sup>

To be a disciple of Jesus is to orient our lives around these three goals:

*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

—Matthew 4:19

GOAL 1: Be with Jesus                      — *Follow me*

GOAL 2: Become like Jesus                — *I will make you*

GOAL 3: Do what Jesus did.                — *make fishers of men, etc.*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.*

—John 14:12

If we are to do the works of Christ, then we should look to Jesus and what he did to figure out what kinds of work that we should do. Below is a short list of things that we find Jesus doing with his disciples in the Gospels.<sup>39</sup>

## THE THINGS THAT JESUS DID.<sup>40</sup>

Preach the gospel of the Kingdom  
Heal the sick  
Cast out demons  
Eat and drink with people who are far from God  
Do justice  
Make peace  
Pray  
Prophecy  
Stand up against religious and political corruption

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<sup>38</sup> Before Jesus' community of disciples were called Christians, they were called the Way, Acts 9:2. Possibly a ref. to Isaiah 35:8. However, we may infer from the name that it was taken because of their obedience to Jesus' teaching.

<sup>39</sup> We should not expect that we will be able to do all of these things or each of these things perfectly. Jesus is the only human who can live the life he calls us to live perfectly. But where we are weak, by the Spirit's help and given a lifetime of following Jesus, we will become stronger and live more like Jesus than when we first began.

<sup>40</sup> Comer, John Mark <https://bridgetown.church/teaching/practicing-the-way/do-what-he-did/> (14:00), Sep. 2018.

# WHAT BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS COSTS

## SALVATION IS FREE, FOLLOWING JESUS IS NOT.

*Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.*

*A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.*

*Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

—Matthew 10:16, 24-25, 37-39

## FOLLOWING JESUS CARRIES A COST THAT FEW ARE WILLING TO PAY.

*And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

—Matthew 4:19

Peter and Andrew immediately left their career as fishermen behind to follow Jesus.

*And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."*

—Matthew 8:19-20

The scribe, if he was to follow Jesus, would have to be willing to give up the comforts of his life for the sake of Jesus' mission.

*Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."*

—Matthew 8:21-22

This disciple would have to forgo attending to his father.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The disciple is not talking about his father's funeral. His father was either still living or he was waiting to bury his father's bones. In the 1st century Jews placed their dead in tombs for a year then exhumed and buried their bones.

*As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.*

—Matthew 9:9

Matthew had to leave his high paying career behind to follow Jesus.

*And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

—Matthew 10:38

*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

—Matthew 16:24

Jesus demands that his disciples die to themselves —their own agendas, their self-autonomy, their pleasures— to follow him.

*Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

—Matthew 19:21-22

The rich man wanted eternal life but not nearly as much as he wanted the things that he possessed.<sup>42</sup>

## TRUE DISCIPLES AND FALSE DISCIPLES

*Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."*

—Matthew 7:21-23

True disciples do the will of their Father in heaven.<sup>43</sup> False disciples do good things that have a veneer of righteousness, but they neither know God nor practice the works of Jesus.

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<sup>42</sup> Jesus is not here saying that his disciples must take a vow of poverty. There are other named disciples in the Gospels who had much who were not told sell all that they had (Luke 8:3, 27:57).

<sup>43</sup> "Doing the will of God" is for Matthew a potent summary of the disciple life (7:21; 12:50; and parabolically in 21:31) R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT; Accordance electronic ed. Eerdmans, 2007, 247.



*Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.*

—Matthew 13:18–23

True disciples hear the good news of the kingdom, they understand it, and they do good works in keeping with their repentance. False disciples do not understand the good news and they turn from following Jesus when things get tough or when the cares of this life become greater in their sight than Jesus.<sup>44</sup>

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

—Matthew 13:47–50

The fish thrown into the furnace are not the ones missed by the net of the kingdom. They are the ones caught by the kingdom and yet unfit for eternal life, presumably because they neither do the works of Jesus nor the will of the Father.<sup>45</sup>

## JESUS' DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

### **JESUS LEADS, WE GO.**

*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

—Matthew 4:19

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<sup>44</sup> Judas betrayed Jesus because he loved money more than he loved God, Matthew 27:3. Many disciples left Jesus because they were unbelieving and could not accept his teaching, John 6:66. Demas deserted Paul because he was in love with the world, 2 Timothy 4:10.

<sup>45</sup> cf. Matthew 18:32–35, 20:10–14, 25:1–30, 45–51

*And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 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.*

—Matthew 28:17-20

STEP 1: I come, you follow, we talk

STEP 2: I do, you watch, we talk

STEP 3: I do, you help, we talk

STEP 4: You do, I help, we talk

STEP 5: You do, I watch, we talk

STEP 6: You go, you lead, you talk

### **Matthew 4:19**

*Follow me*  
Be with Jesus

*I will make you.*  
Become like Jesus

*fishers of men*  
Do what Jesus did.



### **Matthew 28:17-20**

Now you go.  
*I am with you*

Now you make.  
*baptizing them*

Teach others to do what Jesus did.  
*teaching them to observe*

## **LEARNERS, STUDENTS OR APPRENTICES?**

In our modern context, this process probably sounds a lot more like an apprenticeship than it does kindergarten. So we will need to expand our analogy a little further.

An apprentice is someone who works for another person in order to learn a trade. And with many trades, those that require licensing and membership with a trade guild, there is a process of moving from being an apprentice to becoming a master. This is true for plumbers, elevator mechanics, boilermakers, and electricians.

To become an electrician you need to know some basic math. But you'll need someone other than your kindergarten teacher to show you how to use that math as an electrician and to train

you how to safely wire a house. You need a master electrician to guide you, to show you how you can do what he can do. And if you're going to advance in your career as an electrician, you're going to need to spend a lot of time with your master. Eventually you'll graduate from being an apprentice to a journeyman, and from a journeyman to a master. Then you will be qualified to train new apprentices yourself.

This seems to us to be the closest analogy for discipleship in our modern day. So what shall we call ourselves –learners, students, apprentices, or disciples?

While apprentice is the closest approximate English word for mathetes, we have chosen to call ourselves disciples because of its long historical use and biblical association. However, we will think of ourselves and speak of ourselves as apprentices to our master Jesus.

## WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP AT SOMA WAXAHACHIE?

**DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT A PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH, BUT THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLESHIP COULD BE DEFINED AS "SUMMONING PEOPLE TO THE GOSPEL, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON AND SPIRIT, AND EQUIPPING THEM TO INCREASINGLY SUBMIT ALL OF LIFE TO THE LORDSHIP AND EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST."**

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**How has your understanding of the word disciple changed?**

**What affect will this renewed understanding of *disciple* have on your day-to-day life?**

**What affect would this holistic approach to discipleship have on a church community?**

# HOW WE MAKE DISCIPLES

*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.*

—Matthew 28:19–20

## **WE FIND THREE IMPERATIVES IN JESUS' COMMISSION THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND HIS COMMAND TO MAKE DISCIPLES: GO, BAPTIZE, TEACH. IN THIS SECTION WE WILL FOCUS ON *GOING*.<sup>46</sup>**

Congratulations, you're a missionary! Whether you realized it or not, that's exactly who we are. You were created by God (Psalm 139), called by God (Ephesians 1:5), and commissioned by God as a missionary (Matthew 28:18–20). Moreover, the Bible makes it clear that God has also determined the time and place of your life (Acts 17:26). It's fascinating to think that God created you, planned the exact moments you would be alive and the exact places you would spend your few days, so that you could leverage every moment on planet earth for the glory of God and the spread of the gospel. This is your God-given role to play. This is not a Soma Waxahachie program. The more you program missional living, the more you rob it of its power. This is a personal commission, given by God, that reorients the rest of a Christian's life. It's important to notice, a missionary isn't an elite group of Christians. Rather, every single Christian has been commissioned by God as missionaries to the world. We see two aspects to this going as Jesus' missionaries: proactive and reactive.

## GOING — PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE MISSION

We are people on the go, we live as sent people, as missionaries. Mission isn't something that we do, it's not a priority that we make on our busy schedules. It's how we approach all of life. We are everyday people doing everyday things with gospel intentionally. In other words, making disciples never drops off our radar.

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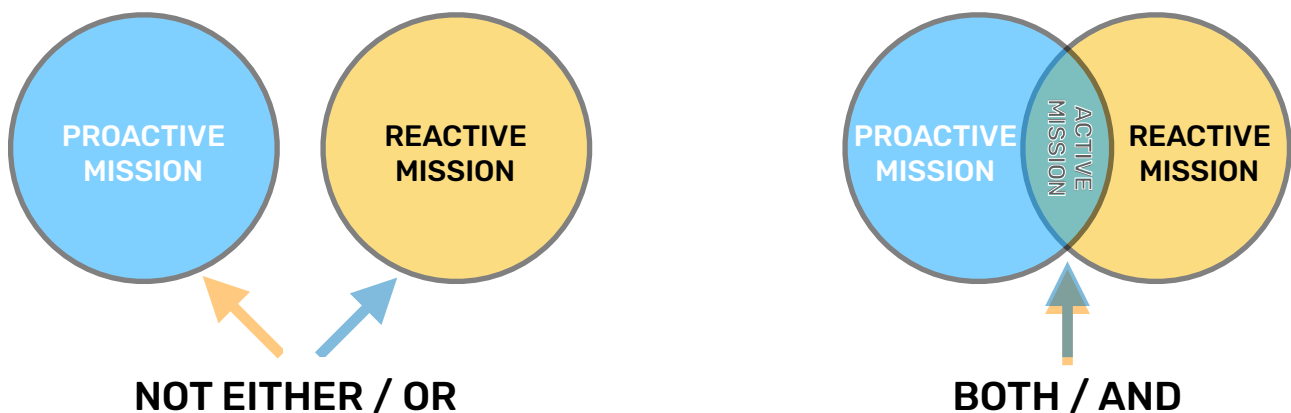
<sup>46</sup> "Go...baptize...teach" are participles modifying the imperative verb "make disciples." According to ExSyn 645 the first participle (πορευθέντες, poreuthentes, "Go") fits the typical structural pattern for the attendant circumstance participle (aorist participle preceding aorist main verb, with the mood of the main verb usually imperative or indicative) and thus picks up the mood (imperative in this case) from the main verb (μαθητεύσατε, matheœteusate, "make disciples"). This means that semantically the action of "going" is commanded, just as "making disciples" is. As for the two participles that follow the main verb (βαπτίζοντες, baptizontes, "baptizing"; and διδάσκοντες, didaskontes, "teaching"), these do not fit the normal pattern for attendant circumstance participles, since they are present participles and follow the aorist main verb. However, some interpreters do see them as carrying additional imperative force in context. Others regard them as means, manner, or even result. — W. Hall Harris, ed., *The NET Bible Notes*, 1st, (Richardson: Biblical Studies Press, 2005), paragraph 65703.

## PROACTIVE MISSION

The active mission is what we plan for. It's everything we do intentionally as a church family together to make, mature, and deploy disciples. Sunday Gatherings, Missional Community, DNA groups.

## REACTIVE MISSION

The reactive mission is what we do not prepare for. It's what we do when God's gives us the opportunity to spontaneously share his good news (beside the water cooler at work, at the golf course, in line at the grocery store, etc.) It's having the posture of a missionary who is always ready to make the most of every opportunity to share the good news of Jesus.



If a community only lives on mission proactively, they will do church gatherings well, with the aim of maturing disciples. But they will often do those things well to the exclusion of the spontaneous work that the Spirit may lay before us. The proactive mission is easy to orchestrate –it's what we do– therefore, it's really easy to exchange human ingenuity, innovation, and methodology for the work and power of the Spirit.

On the other hand, if a person or group lives on mission reactively, they may be prepared to make disciples by sharing the gospel, but they do it to the exclusion of the larger mission of the church. These people tend to be rogue Christian mercenaries who operate in isolation or insular communities, without the protection of Christian community, and untethered from the authority of a local church.

A balanced church will live actively on mission, engaging in both the proactive and reactive mission. At Soma Waxahachie we are interested in the wholistic process of disciple-making; making, maturing and deploying disciples in community and on mission together.

## THREE RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

**DISCIPLE-MAKING HAPPENS MOST EFFECTIVELY WHEN WE OPERATE IN THREE PRIMARY RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS: LIFE ON LIFE, LIFE IN COMMUNITY, AND LIFE ON MISSION.**

1. Life on Life – Making disciples means we share life with people so we know their stories, know their struggles, and can see each other walk in faith and obedience. They also get to know us! To be a disciple means we will share our lives with others.

2. Life in Community – Making disciples requires the input, encouragement, gifting, and example of a whole group of people. It can't just be one-on-one. We need the body. We need community to know how to follow Jesus.

3. Life on Mission – Making disciples draws us into the mission of sharing the gospel with friends, neighbors, and families. Our communities live outwardly, seeking to make the gospel clear through our words and actions to others.

## THREE EQUIPPING ENVIRONMENTS

**THERE ARE THREE RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS WHERE WE PROACTIVELY MAKE DISCIPLES. WE TAKE OUR LEAD FROM JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLE-MAKING PROCESS AS OUR EXAMPLE.**

1. Sunday Gatherings

2. Missional Community

3. DNA Groups

### **SUNDAY GATHERINGS**

Jesus not only gathered large crowds in his itinerant ministry but he also taught in synagogues on the sabbath (Luke 4:16) –the weekly gathered worship rhythm of the Jewish people in his day (Acts 15:21). We also find Jesus' disciples continuing to gather to teach in this weekly rhythm after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 20:7).

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

–Hebrews 10:24-25

As we read in Hebrews, gatherings played a critical role in the life of the early church. The writer of Hebrews exhorts the church to gather regularly so that they could encourage one another and motivate one another towards love and good works. This was an important part of forming them in the hope of the gospel. We believe Sunday gatherings are an important part of how God has called us to be a family in our city. Every day we are tempted to turn inward, to move toward isolation, and to do life in our own strength. The good news of Jesus tells us there is no life found apart from Him, and this life is to be lived out in community.

We gather corporately to regularly reorient our worship around Jesus! This is the fuel for our participation in God's mission! We come together to remind one another that we are a family of servant missionaries by the grace of God! We encourage one another through singing, the reading of Scriptures, praying together, taking communion, and hearing the word of God proclaimed.

Liturgy – Liturgy means “work of the people”. Everything we do when we gather is to help form and shape us as God's family. From our call to worship, to our singing, creeds, confessions, prayers, teaching, and taking communion; our hope is to encourage and equip the saints for the work of ministry. Our liturgy is meant to share the story, help us rehearse the story, and remind ourselves of the story so that we can live in light of and within it.

Engaging the Gathering – Our gatherings are not spectator events but opportunities for us to serve one another and encourage one another towards love and good works. We don't gather primarily for our personal edification; instead, we gather for the greater good of serving one another. We find that through using our gifts and serving one another in love, God changes us, shapes us, and encourages us.

Kids and the Gathering – Children are normally taken to their classes after our time of corporate singing, but they are also welcome and encouraged to participate in the gathering with their parents. We leave it up to parents to decide what is best for their family.

## **MISSIONAL COMMUNITY**

While Jesus had hundreds of disciples who followed him everywhere he went, he gave himself in a particular way to 12 men.<sup>47</sup> He did life with them, he equipped them for ministry (Luke 10:1-23), he commissioned them and then deployed them into the world to do for others what he had done for them (Matthew 28:18-20). Our missional communities serve this same purpose.

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<sup>47</sup> While we recognize that the number 12 has theological significance and is not a prescription for how we must gather, we do see the value and practicality of giving ourselves to a smaller group of disciples. The larger a church becomes the less able that church is to provide the sort of community that is necessary for individual and corporate spiritual growth. Additionally, the larger a church becomes the less flexible the mission of the church becomes. Having multiple missional communities allows for greater flexibility, adaptability, and the opportunity for us to spread our disciple-making mission out in many different directions at the same time.

Missional community is a family of servant missionaries committed to growing as disciples and making new disciples in all of life.

While this is an amazing picture of what the church should be and do, how can we do this today in our culture? So many of us have grown up in a context where church happens 1 hour a week on Sunday that we struggle to see what Jesus has to do with Monday through Saturday. While we don't live this out perfectly, our vision is that our missional communities would be built upon the same core practices of the early church. Our commitment to missional communities being the primary place we make disciples and building them upon the same simple rhythms of the early church means we keep our church structure simple. Rather than church life centered around programs or buildings, we see ordinary life as the best context for disciples to grow in.

The everyday rhythms of life – As we have begun to live out our biblical convictions here in our context we have realized that many of us are so conditioned to see church in small religious boxes (Sunday morning, Wednesday nights) of our life that we need help to see how the Gospel shapes our everyday lives. Rather than adding tons of events or programs to your life, we want to help you bring Gospel intentionality to the everyday rhythms of life. To help us see this we have found it helpful to teach through six everyday rhythms that help us see how we can live out our Gospel identity in the everyday stuff of life.

**EAT** - We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into the community of God. Meals are a daily reminder of our common need for God and his faithfulness to provide both physically and spiritually. Jesus called us to remember him and his sacrifice for us through a meal. When we eat together, we commune around this truth. We regularly eat meals with those not in our immediate family or circle of close friends, discipling them toward a life of dependence on God. (Leviticus 23; Matthew 6:11, 26:17-30; Acts 2:46-47; Romans 12:13)

**LISTEN** - We set aside regular times to listen to God in prayer. We listen “backward” by regularly interacting with the Scriptures—the story and the Son. We spend time actively listening “forward” to hear what God is saying to us today, applying his word. We also listen to what God is saying through his people, and to what the people are saying that we are sent to reach. (Mark 1:35-37; John 16:7-15; Hebrews 1:1-3; Romans 1:20)

**STORY** - We understand that every person is living in light of a fundamental story (worldview). We have been rescued from the me-centered story, and awakened to the true and better story of God. By grace, we are part of this story and need to understand it and see how our lives are shaped by it. Therefore, we regularly remind ourselves with the story by interacting with God's word. We look for ways and times to tell the story



often. We also take time to listen to others' stories and help them find their lives within God's story. (Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1; Psalm 1; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**CELEBRATE** - We gather to celebrate God's extravagant blessings. We also gather around each other during times of suffering. We see both celebration and suffering as opportunities to declare; to one another and the world around us--the presence and power of God. This means we are a people that party together. We look for any excuse to celebrate God's bountiful grace and point to the ultimate celebration we will one day enjoy. We are also quick to gather around those who are suffering. We mourn with those who are mourning, but our mourning is not without hope. (Leviticus 23; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25)

**BLESS** - We intentionally bless others through words, gifts, or actions. The resources (time, money, possessions, personalities, skills) God has given us are no longer viewed as ours, but as gifts for us to steward. God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others. God desires that all nations—all people—would be blessed through Jesus. And now, as his body, we live out this mission as we bless others. We intentionally seek God's direction for who he would have us tangibly bless each week. (Genesis 12:1-3; Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:8-10; 1 Peter 2:12)

**ReCREATE** - We regularly take time to rest our minds and bodies. We do this through Christ-centered recreation, relaxation, and restoration. We also work as those working for Christ. Work no longer defines us, but it displays Christ. We work hard out of the rest we have in Christ to display and declare his glory in our unique vocational calling. His creativity, compassion, care, and consistency are the values that flow from his grace to our work. We get to participate in God's creative activity! (Genesis 1-2:3; Deuteronomy 5:12; Mark 2:23-28; Hebrews 4)

## DNA GROUPS

Within Jesus' group of twelve he had an even smaller cohort of three with whom he was more intentional. Peter, James, and John were given more attention and greater access to Jesus in his ministry than the remaining eight. This prepared each of them individually for the important roles they each would play in the future of the church. We have modeled our DNA Groups off of this idea.

DNA<sup>48</sup> Group usually consists of three people—men with men, women with women—within a particular community on mission, who meet together regularly to be known and to bring the gospel to bear on each other's lives so that they grow in and live out their gospel identity. DNA Groups are not about self improvement, but God's unending grace to transform us through the gospel—Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection. (Galatians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

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<sup>48</sup> DNA stands for **D**iscover (what God is saying to the group through his word and by his Spirit), **N**urture (what God has said into the hearts of one another), and **A**ct (on what God has said).

# HOW SOMA WAXAHACHIE ORGANIZES AROUND MISSION

**WE BELIEVE THAT THE PRIMARY ORGANIZING STRUCTURE FOR THE CHURCH IS A NETWORK OF CLOSELY CONNECTED MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES WHICH ARE MAKING DISCIPLES IN THE EVERYDAY NORMAL STUFF OF LIFE, IN THE PLACES WHERE THEY LIVE WORK AND PLAY.**

If the mission of God is to saturate the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (Habakkuk 2:14, Isaiah 11:9, 40:5), and the mission of the Church is to make, mature, and deploy disciples of Jesus, then the most efficient means for our local church to accomplish this goal locally is to organize ourselves in smaller mission oriented communities scattered across the landscape of our city.

It is vital that every church clearly answers the question: “How are we going to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ?” A lack of clarity at this point kills. Every church has an answer to this question, but our experience is that most do not take the time to clarify it. So for the sake of clarity, we have two statements that answer the “how” of mission for our church.

## **1. OUR STRATEGY IS BUILT ON PEOPLE, NOT ON PROGRAMS NOR PROPERTY.**

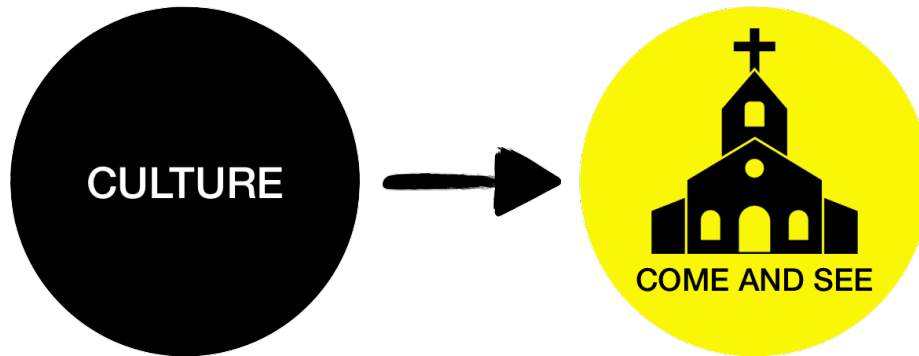
This means that we are not looking for the biggest and best building, the latest tool, or the next gadget, but for the people of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, to live on the mission of God. In simple terms, that is our strategy to reach the community and to see God transform our city with the Gospel.

Many churches today organize themselves around what they hope to accomplish in an hour-and-a-half time slot on Sunday mornings. This includes everything which has historically been expected from a Sunday church gathering –worship, teaching, fellowship, exercising the spiritual gifts, sharing the Lord’s table– however, in recent years the ministry philosophies of many churches have drifted away from equipping and edifying the church, and drifted toward appealing to the unsaved out in the culture.

The unfortunate consequence of these organizational and ministry philosophies is that they often 1) lead churches to compromise on biblical truths and fidelity to the gospel for this sake of remaining attractive to the culture; 2) they cause churches to compete with other churches for their market share of people who identify as Christian in their city; 3) they lead churches to

spend inordinate amounts of money on their buildings<sup>49</sup> 4) they lead the congregation to believe that the pastor is the professional Christian who they pay to do the work of ministry for them; and 5) they destroy the evangelistic and missional impulse of the congregation.

### ATTRACTIONAL CHURCH MODEL



## 2. OUR CHURCH IS PRIMARILY MISSIONAL, SECONDARILY ATTRACTIVE.

We are first a “go and tell” church, not a “come and see” church. Our primary strategy to reach the community is not by them coming to see our church on Sunday morning, but by our church family going and telling throughout the week. However, recognizing our cultural context we understand that there is still a significant expectation for people who are seeking truth to show up at a Sunday morning service. We want to make ourselves available to these people and to conduct our services in such a way that they are accessible to our unredeemed neighbors. We also understand that many of our neighbors, though they claim Christianity as their religion, are actually religiously lost people who have yet to submit themselves to the authority of Jesus Christ.

### MISSIONAL CHURCH MODEL



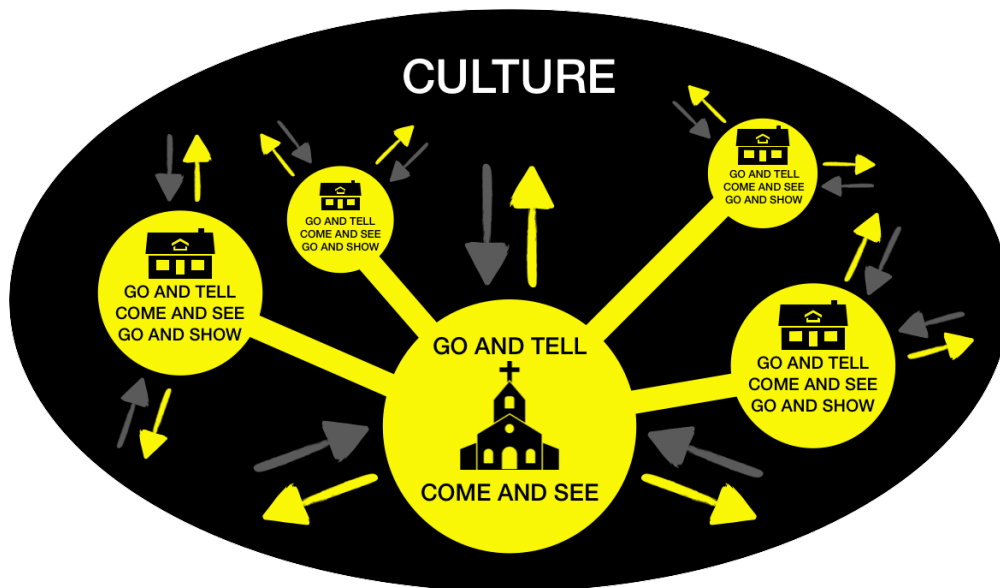
<sup>49</sup> The largest total grouping of expenditures in most church budgets are associated with the cost of owning, operating and maintaining property.

### 3. OUR STRATEGY FOR REACHING THE LOST IN WAXAHACHIE IS TO EQUIP, COMMISSION AND DEPLOY THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH TO LIVE ON MISSION AND IN GOSPEL COMMUNITY.

Soma Waxahachie is organized around missional communities. These communities operate more like a closely connected network of house churches than they do traditional small groups<sup>50</sup> meeting in homes.

We live as sent people Monday thru Saturday in community and gather on Sunday as an aggregate of many missional communities to celebrate all that God has done in history and throughout our week.

#### MISSIONAL COMMUNITY STRATEGY



<sup>50</sup> In most cases, a small group is designed to accomplish for the church what is lost in the weekly gathering. The larger a church grows the more encumbered it becomes. The intimacy, transparency, and accountability that was experienced at the first, when the church was small, is lost as the congregation swells and individual people begin to fade into a sea of nameless faces.

Small groups have also been adopted by many churches in an exchange for their Sunday school programs. Because Sunday schools are less frequently attended today and square footage is expensive, churches have opted to organize their members into small groups and to send them into their homes to accomplish throughout the week what was once accomplished on Sunday morning. This organizational approach tends to form small groups in two ways, 1) small groups are bible studies, and 2) members are organized based on their interests or their life stage.

Missional communities are similar to small groups in that they're both designed to foster the intimacy, transparency, and accountability that is lost in a larger Sunday gathering. However, they're dissimilar in their primary purpose:

- 1) MCs, while the Bible is studied, are not primarily bible study groups.
- 2) MCs have a regular schedule for gathering but they are not defined primarily by the time or place that they meet.
- 3) MCs are not segregated by interest, age or gender.
- 4) Every MC agrees to participate in the mission of making disciples among an identified people group in their context (e.g. neighborhood, school, sports team, cause oriented organization).
- 5) MCs are made up of followers of Jesus and unbelieving neighbors.
- 6) MC leaders are commissioned by the church to teach, to administer communion, and perform baptisms.

# GO & TELL, COME & SEE, AND GO & SHOW COMMUNITIES

**MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES ARE SENT TO GO AND TELL WAXAHACHIE THAT JESUS IS KING; THEY INVITE THEIR NEIGHBORS INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES TO COME AND SEE THAT OUR KING IS GOOD; AND THEY GO AND SHOW THE RESTORATIVE AND REVIVING LOVE OF OUR KING TO THE BROKEN PEOPLE AND PLACES IN OUR CITY.**

Go and tell – We are a proclamation people. We proclaim the good news of our King and the coming of his kingdom to the people of our city.

Come and see – We are an attractive people. Our missional communities –though filled with broken followers of Jesus who are in the process of being changed– are a preview of what life will be like when humanity is fully restored; where social class and ethnicity have lost their meaning; where God’s material gifts freely flow from the hands of those who have much to those who are in need; where healing is administered, restoration is pursued, and forgiveness is freely given and received.

Go and show – We are a demonstration people. And we demonstrate by our good works and our service to our city that the gospel has the power to change, not just our lives, but to transform our city as well. And the light that is broadcast out into the dark places of our city through our good works will cause our neighbors to give glory to our Father who is in heaven.<sup>51</sup> We take spiritual responsibility for the places where God has planted us.

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**We’ve identified 3 relational environments that are vital for spiritual maturity, in which of these environments are you lacking?**

**Why is it important that we move from a Sunday only understanding of following Jesus together in the everyday stuff of life? How is God leading you to start doing this?**

**What aspects of being part of a missional community are important to you? What part of missional community life do you find challenging?**

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<sup>51</sup> Deuteronomy 4:6-8, Matthew 5:15-16, 1 Peter 2:12

# APPENDIX 1

## MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

When anyone enters into a relationship with God by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, they are entering into two covenants. The first is to journey with God for the rest of their lives and love him fully. The second is to journey with his other children in the community of the local church. Your membership in a church is an official recognition of this. The purposes of the Soma Membership Covenant are:

- 1) To join the Spirit in forming an authentic church community that reflects the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit.
- 2) To clarify the on-going blessings and responsibilities of each member.
- 3) To encourage consistency, accountability, and loving unity within the church family.
- 4) To accomplish God's call for the Soma family.

This agreement does not imply that you will never fall short of the goals, but that the desire of your heart is to fulfill to the best of your ability each of the responsibilities stated. We trust that our commitment will be a personal blessing to your own journey in Christ, as well as a blessing to those around you.

### **WITH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP COVENANTS THE FOLLOWING:**

- 1) We covenant ourselves to lovingly care for you and seek your growth in Christ (Hebrews 13:17; Thessalonians 5:12).
- 2) We covenant to provide teaching, preaching, and counsel from the Scriptures (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
- 3) We covenant that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28).
- 4) We covenant to help you in times of need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 5:14-17).
- 5) We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13 & 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- 6) We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
- 7) We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
- 8) We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1).

- 9) We covenant to help you become equipped to serve Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- 10) We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- 11) We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, 1 Timothy 4:12).

**WITH THE GUIDING HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, I, THE UNDERSIGNED COVENANT THE FOLLOWING:**

- 1) I am a follower of Jesus who has been saved from my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ. I have been baptized by immersion to give testimony of my identification with the body of Christ and obedience to the Scriptures.
- 2) I have read and understood Soma Waxahachie's statement of Theological Distinctives (Appendix 2, below) and agree to not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ephesians 4:1-3).
- 3) I will endeavor to maintain a close relationship with the Lord through regular personal Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of the other spiritual disciplines. My journey in Christ will be evident through my regular participation in the corporate worship services and involvement in a Missional Community (Psalms 119:97, 105; Acts 2:24-47; Hebrews 10:23-25).
- 4) I will strive to properly manage the resources God has given me, including my time, body, gifts and talents, attitude, finances, and possessions (Ephesians 4:1-16, 5:15-18; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-26; Proverbs 3:9-10). This includes regular giving to Soma that is sacrificial and cheerful (2 Corinthians 8-9).
- 5) I commit myself to the Soma family and agree to aid in fulfilling its missional purpose to both be and bring the gospel to the Waxahachie/Ellis County area. I recognize that this will be accomplished by pursuing Soma's core values of Gospel, Community, and Mission.
- 6) I commit to using the spiritual gift(s) God has given me for the building up of the church, both at Soma and universally (1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-31).
- 7) I understand that serving regularly is an expectation and membership requirement. I am currently serving in the following capacity at Soma:
- 8) 

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By God's grace, I covenant to strive toward both humility and holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus (1 Peter 1:13-16. 1 Peter 1:22-24). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while

stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:

- I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex, pornography, and homosexuality (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 1 Corinthians 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
- I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through a process of marriage reconciliation at Soma before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6).
- I will refrain from drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).

8) I covenant to submit to the discipline of God through the Holy Spirit by:

- following the biblical procedures for church discipline (as outlined in our membership packet) when sin is evident in another, with the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
- receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).
- to do the following when I sin:
  - confess my sin to God and to fellow believers.
  - repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

9) I covenant to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalms 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

10) I covenant to do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:

- to notify the appropriate staff member.
- to seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer. God enabling me, I will strive to consider my





# **APPENDIX 2**

## **THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES**

**Along with our commitment to The Lausanne Covenant Statement of Faith, Soma Waxahachie holds to six core theological emphases:**

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is central for our motivation and practice.
- God acts sovereignly in saving sinners.
- The continuing presence of the Holy Spirit equips and empowers the saints.
- Jesus is King and his Kingdom is come.
- All believers are sent on Jesus' mission to make disciples.
- God created men and women as equal and complementary image bearers of God.

### THE GOSPEL

**We believe the glory of God is seen most beautifully in the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

The Gospel is the good news of what God has graciously accomplished for sinners through the sinless life, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of his Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, namely our forgiveness from sin and complete justification before God; this gospel is also the foundation for our confidence in the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom and the consummation of His purpose for all creation in the new heavens and new earth. This Gospel is centered in Christ, is the foundation for the life of the Church, and is our only hope for eternal life; this Gospel is not proclaimed if Christ's penal substitutionary death and bodily resurrection are not central to our message. This Gospel is not only the means by which people are saved, but also the truth and power by which people are sanctified; it is the truth of the Gospel that enables us to do what is pleasing to God genuinely and joyfully and to grow in progressive conformity to the image of Christ. The salvation offered in this gospel message is received by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; no ordinance, ritual, work, or any other activity on the part of man is required in order to be saved. (Mark 1:1; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16-18; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 1:18-25; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:2; 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 9:13; Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 1:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 1:8-14; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Jude 1:3-4)

## OUR SALVATION

**We enthusiastically embrace the sovereignty of God's grace in saving sinners.**

We affirm God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, not on the basis of foreseen faith but unconditionally, according to his sovereign good pleasure and will. We believe through the work of the Holy Spirit, God will draw the elect to faith in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously and effectually overcoming their stubborn resistance to the gospel so they will believe most assuredly and willingly. We also believe that these, the elect of God whom he gave to the Son, will persevere in belief and godly behavior and be kept secure in their salvation by grace through faith. We believe that God's sovereignty in this salvation neither diminishes the responsibility of people to believe in Christ, nor marginalizes the necessity and power of prayer and evangelism, but rather reinforces and establishes them as the ordained means by which God accomplishes his ordained ends. (John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30; Acts 13:48; 16:30-31; Romans 3:1-4; 25; 8:1-17, 31-39; 9:1-23; 10:8-10; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 1:7,9)

## THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

**We recognize and rest upon the necessity of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit for all life and ministry.**

The Holy Spirit is fully God, equal with the Father and Son, whose primary ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He also convicts unbelievers of their need for Christ and imparts spiritual life through regeneration (the new birth). The Spirit permanently indwells, graciously sanctifies, lovingly leads, and empowers all who are brought to faith in Christ so they might live in obedience to the inerrant Scriptures. The model for our reliance upon the Spirit and our experience of His indwelling and empowering presence is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who was filled with the Spirit and entirely dependent upon His power for the performance of miracles, the preaching of the kingdom of God, and all other dimensions of His earthly ministry. The Holy Spirit, who indwelled and empowered Christ in like manner, indwells and empowers all who belong to Christ through spiritual gifts. He has bestowed spiritual gifts for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. Although there are different understandings of the nature and function of these gifts, we recognize they are divine provisions central to spiritual growth and effective ministry and are to be eagerly desired, faithfully developed, and lovingly exercised according to biblical guidelines. (Matthew 3:11; 12:28; Luke 4:1,14; 5:17; 10:21; John 1:12-13; 3:1-15, 34; 14:12; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Acts 2:14-21; 4:29-30; 10:38; Romans 8:9; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-13; 12:28-31; 14:1-33; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 3:1-5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18)

## MISSIONAL CHURCH

**Soma Waxahachie embraces a missionary understanding of the local church and its role as the primary means by which God chooses to establish his kingdom on earth.**

The church has a clear biblical mandate to look beyond its own community to the neighborhood, the nation, and the world as a whole; thus mission is not an optional program in the church but an essential element in the identity of the church. We are called to make Christ known through the Gospel and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring His lordship to bear on every dimension of life. The primary way we fulfill this mission is through the equipping of the saints for ministry in our local church and seeking to make Jesus known in our local communities. Our aim is that Jesus Christ would be more fully formed in each person through the ministry of Soma Waxahachie and that God would empower us to share the good news of Jesus Christ in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and families, sharing in and celebrating His redemptive work together. We also believe we are responsible neither to retreat from our culture nor to conform to it, but with humility, through the Spirit and the truth of the gospel, to engage it boldly as we seek its transformation and submission to the lordship of Christ. (Isaiah 52:7; Matthew 10:5–25; 28:18–20; Luke 4:18–19; 24:46–47; Acts 28:31; Romans 10:14–15; 2 Corinthians 10:4–5; Galatians 2:10; Ephesians 3:10; 4:11–16; 2 Timothy 4:1–5; Hebrews 10:23–25; 1 Peter 2:4–5, 9–10)

## ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE

**We believe that the gospel overtakes the world and King Jesus returns to a victorious Church.**

In the Gospels, Jesus teaches us how his Kingdom will break into the world. He tells his disciples that it's like a mustard seed, that starts out very small, but grows into a great tree, large enough to provide shade for the birds of the air that perch upon its branches. He says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a small bit of yeast working its way through a large lump of dough. Like a mustard plant and yeast, the Kingdom of Heaven is invasive. It aggressively works its way and spreads throughout every environment where it is introduced. As the Church, we believe that the Kingdom of Heaven is manifest within us and spreads out through us into the material world when we live like Jesus, obedient to do all that he has commanded. And as Jesus' people we represent him as an ambassadorial outpost of his Kingdom, colonizing heaven on earth, throughout Waxahachie and beyond. With this, we believe that the culture that Jesus' Kingdom brings will invariably change the culture of our city as it penetrates and is diffused throughout every realm of life. Where the existing culture is

in alignment with God's will and the ethics of his Kingdom, that goodness will be amplified. Where the culture is more like hell on earth than heaven, the goodness and the light of Jesus' Kingdom, that we bring as his Church, will drive back the darkness of sin and the brokenness of this world. As Soma Waxahachie, we join Jesus in the renewal of all things through the hope of the gospel and his Kingdom come. (Psalm 2:7-9, 72; Isaiah 2; Dan 2:31-35, 7:13-14; Habakkuk 2:14; Matthew 12:28, 13, 28:18-20; Acts 3:19-21; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26; Hebrews 1:3)

## MEN AND WOMEN

**We are deeply committed to the fundamental spiritual and moral equality and complementarity of men and women.**

Both men and women are together created in the divine image and are therefore equal before God as persons, possessing the same moral dignity and value, and have equal access to God through faith in Christ. Men and women are together the recipients of spiritual gifts designed to empower them for ministry in the local church and beyond. Therefore both men and women are to be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to utilize their gifting in ministry, in service to the body of Christ, and through teaching in ways that are consistent with the Word of God. Both husbands and wives are responsible to God for spiritual nurture and vitality in the home, but God has given to the man primary responsibility to lead his wife and family in accordance with the servant-leadership and sacrificial love characterized by Jesus Christ. This principle of male headship should not be confused with, nor give any hint of, domineering control. Rather it is to be the loving, tender, and nurturing care of a godly man who is himself under the kind and gentle authority of Jesus Christ. The elders of our church have been granted authority under the headship of Jesus Christ to provide oversight of the church. The office of elder is restricted to men. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

# **APPENDIX 3**

## **VISION STATEMENT**

### WHO WE ARE

We don't believe the Church is another sub-culture, but the making of a new humanity. It's not a building or a weekend activity, but a people chosen by God for his redemptive purposes in the world, for the joy of all people and the eternal glory of his name.

And while we don't believe the Church is an activity or a building –that we are a people– we do believe that we are a people given to a place. So we want to take spiritual responsibility for the city where God has settled us. This means that we believe that we're called to live beyond Sunday gatherings and midweek Bible studies, to invest our whole lives in developing deep community with fellow believers in proximity to where we live. We take ownership of the spiritual condition of Waxahachie by bringing the good news of Jesus' Kingdom to those who are far from God and finding ways to not only love one another, but tangibly love those living nearby through acts of service and stewarding resources for the common good.

That's why we want to partner with God in his relentless pursuit to put the world to rights. Our prayer is as Jesus prayed, that God's will would be done here in Waxahachie as it is in Heaven.

We believe that this happens when we declare in word, and demonstrate in deed, the truth and good news that Jesus is King and his Kingdom is come. We consider these truths together by speaking about Gospel Saturation and Kingdom Diffusion.

### **GOSPEL SATURATION**

Soma's vision is gospel saturation, so that every man, woman and child in Waxahachie has a daily encounter with Jesus in word and deed.

In Habakkuk 2:14 the prophet looks forward to a time in human history when the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. Then, in Matthew 28, Jesus tells us how that's going to be accomplished. He commissions his disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. So we have a promise (that the earth will be saturated in the knowledge of God's glory) and we have a mandate (to go and disciple the nations); that makes us the means by which God is accomplishing his promise.

In our desire to take spiritual responsibility for our city we are convinced that gospel saturation and disciple-making is most effectively accomplished by living together in missional community. Missional Communities are where we strive to live out the good news of Jesus where we live throughout our city and throughout the week; then to gather each Sunday as a collection of missional communities to celebrate all that Jesus has done.

*"...the conversion of the nations is not so much a task laid upon the Church as a promise given to the Church" –Lesslie Newbigin*

## **KINGDOM DIFFUSION**

In the Gospels, Jesus teaches us how his Kingdom will break into the world. He tells his disciples that it's like a mustard seed that starts out very small but in time grows into a great tree, large enough to provide shade for the birds of the air that perch upon its branches. He says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a measure of yeast working its way through a large lump of dough. Like a mustard plant and a little yeast, the Kingdom of Heaven begins small but it's invasive. It aggressively works its way in and spreads itself throughout every environment where it is introduced.

As the Church, we believe that the Kingdom of Heaven is manifest within us and spreads outward through us into the material world when we live like Jesus, obedient to do all that he has commanded. And as Jesus' people we represent him as an ambassadorial outpost of his Kingdom, colonizing heaven on earth, throughout Waxahachie. With this, we believe that the culture that Jesus' Kingdom brings will invariably change the culture of our city as it penetrates and is diffused throughout every realm of life. Where the existing culture is in alignment with God's will and the ethics of his Kingdom, that goodness will be amplified. Where the culture is more like hell on earth than heaven, the goodness and the light of Jesus' Kingdom, that we bring as his Church, will drive back the darkness of sin and the brokenness of this world.

As Soma Waxahachie, we join Jesus in the renewal of all things through the hope of the gospel and his Kingdom come.

*"No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found."*

*–Isaac Watts*

# APPENDIX 4

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

**Throughout its pages, the Bible sounds a recurring theme: Those God loves, he disciplines.<sup>52</sup>**

Discipline is a sometimes challenging process of God correcting His people's thoughts, words, and behavior so they can fulfill their calling to become like Him. God disciplines His people through a variety of means.

He calls His people first to self-discipline. Each Christian is called to hear the Word of God as he reads the Bible and hears the Bible taught and applied. As he compares his life to God's Word, he adjusts himself to conform to his Savior. But individual interaction with God through His Word is not the only means that God uses to make His children holy.

God also uses His people. "Brothers," writes Paul, "if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness ..." As members of Soma Waxahachie, we take seriously our responsibility to "restore" members who fail to allow God to discipline them personally for their sins. This means that beginning with private confrontation and, if necessary, leading to public rebuke, we seek to help one another overcome any refusal to repent of those words and actions that the Bible clearly defines as sin.

This includes not only sinful words and behavior, but also refusal to turn from heretical doctrine. Jesus outlined a process for addressing another believer's sin in Matthew 18:15-17. As a church we agree that this is the way for us to approach someone who refuses to appropriate God's grace for change.

Initially, church discipline should be informal: If a Christian sees sin in a brother or sister that appears to be continual, he should approach that person and inquire about it. If in fact there is unrepentant sin and a refusal to repent, then the concerned brother or sister should involve one or two others, which may include a pastor and/or an elder. If this group confirms that, in fact, sin continues without repentance, the process must move to formal church discipline, because...

God also uses pastors to make his children holy. When the church begins to formally discipline a member, the church's pastors and/or elders inquire with the individual member in question

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<sup>52</sup> And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (Hebrews 12:5-6 ESV, see also verses 7-13)



to confirm fact and to appeal for change. If change is not forthcoming, the elders will inform the church of the member and his sin, urging members to contact the member and appeal for repentance. During this time, the member under discipline may not participate in the Lord's Supper or attend meetings for the purpose of fellowship. Instead, his participation with members should revolve around his need for change. If, after a reasonable period of appeal, no repentance is forthcoming, the elders will inform the church again, this time announcing that they must revoke membership and that the church must now treat the unrepentant person as they treat unbelievers. In other words, when they interact with this person they should have "fellowship" as the Bible defines it, but they should appeal for the former member to put his faith in Jesus' work on the cross for them and to turn from his sin.

Church discipline has nothing to do with "shunning" a person. It involves first confronting in love and gentleness and, if unsuccessful, withholding fellowship. It is not rejection of a relationship but a change in the nature of a relationship. If a person under discipline is not factious or disruptive or a harmful influence, he is welcomed to attend all church meetings that are open to unbelievers. The elders may decide to abbreviate or eliminate the process of appeal for repentance if the sin is especially notorious, or if the member proves to be factious, disruptive or leading others into sin or error. In these cases, the elders may ask church members to avoid all contact with an individual in order to mitigate his sinful influence.

At times a member may seek to withdraw from the church to avoid church discipline and its consequences. Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock (Matthew 18:12-14; Ezekiel 34:4,8-16), so shall the pastors, elders, and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through biblical discipline. Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the elders determine that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing member to remain in this congregation, the church has the right and responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. In doing so, the elders, at their discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate censure. If a member leaves the church while he is under the disciplinary process or while a censure against him is still in effect, and if the elders learn that he is attending another church, the elders may inform that church that the person is currently under church discipline and may ask that church to encourage the accused to repent of his sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people whom he has offended. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his sin, and, at the same time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the accused might do to their members (Matthew 18:12-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9, 14-15; 3 John 9-10).



# APPENDIX 5

## NEW MEMBER QUESTIONS

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CHILDREN'S INFORMATION

Name 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 5: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Previous Church Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ How Introduced to Soma Waxahachie: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptized (date/location): \_\_\_\_\_ Began Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

For the following questions, please model your answers after Paul's conversion story to King Agrippa in Acts 26:4-23. In this section, you will see that Paul's story includes *who he was before* he became a Christian, *how he met Jesus*, and *how his life has changed* after becoming a Christian. He concludes his account by giving a statement of his beliefs.

If you are a Christian, give an account of how you came to faith:

Finish the following statement: I know I am a Christian because...

How strong is your faith currently; how vibrant is your walk with Jesus?

Do you have any questions that are left unanswered?

# **APPENDIX 6**

## **WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS?**

Thank you so much for completing our We Are Soma membership class. You are now all set for your last step toward Covenant Membership. It is your responsibility to email Jeremy Beggs (jeremy@somawaxahachie.com) to set up a follow-up conversation.

### **WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING THE FOLLOW UP CONVERSATION?**

This is a chance for us to get to sit down with you and your family for a few minutes to get to know you, to hear the story of how God has rescued you, to hear about what God is currently doing in your life and in your family, and to answer any additional questions you have. We view the follow-up conversation as a way to get to know and serve every person who becomes a part of the Soma Waxahachie family.

### **WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO THE FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION?**

- 1) You need to have a few things ready and with you when we meet together:
- 2) You need to have your church membership covenant signed. (Appendix 1)
- 3) You need to have a background check filled out. To serve in any ministry dealing with minors, a background check is a necessity. So we like to get that completed for all of our covenant members to help in clearing the pathway toward serving in those areas. (email Jeremy for a background check)
- 4) You need to have the church discipline statement signed. (Appendix 4)
- 5) You need to have the new members questionnaire filled out. (Appendix 5)