

# CORE VALUES

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Fully | grow  
Devoted | connect  
serve  
share

# CORE VALUES

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At McLean Bible Church we desire to honor Jesus Christ, we are committed to the authority of the Scriptures, and we are dependent upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. The vision of McLean Bible Church incorporates 10 core values:

1. People matter to God and to us. (Luke 15)
2. The Gospel message transforms people's lives. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
3. The goal of our ministry is to transform people into fully devoted followers of Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-16)
4. Ministry and evangelism must be carried out in a relevant way. (1 Corinthians 9:22b)
5. People must be treated gently and respectfully. (1 Peter 3:15)
6. People need to be connected to a caring community. (Acts 4:34-35; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)
7. Every Christian has a God-given ministry. (Ephesians 4:12)
8. Everything we do for Christ must be done with excellence. (Colossians 3:23-24)
9. Our church must have an evangelistic impact on our community. (Acts 6:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:8)
10. To accomplish our mission we must be willing to step out in visionary faith and take risk for God. (Hebrews 11:6)

Not just any church can accomplish the mission that we at McLean Bible Church have. In order to successfully achieve our mission, we must be a distinctive kind of church family.

- We must become effective students of our culture.
- We must discover the objections that people in Washington, DC, have to Jesus Christ, the Bible and Christianity. And then we must build a church culture that removes or, to the greatest degree possible, ameliorates these objections without in any way watering down the truth of the Bible.
- In other words, we must be driven by a distinctive set of Core Values.

In this regard, we believe that God has uniquely designed and gifted McLean Bible Church to enable us to carry out our mission. This is what our Core Values are all about. They are the enduring tenets that run deep in the soul of McLean Bible Church. They are the dynamic issues that give shape and definition to our ministry. They are the distinctive and defining values that allow us to achieve our mission.

## I. PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD – AND TO US

Jesus Christ didn't die on the cross for church budgets, church programs, church attendance figures, offering plates or stained glass windows. Jesus didn't die on the cross for acreage, square footage or parking-lot size.

Jesus died on the cross for people! It was the value that God places on people which drove Jesus to the cross and which kept him there through all the pain and suffering that was involved.

One of the biggest objections to Christianity among those in our secular world is the way they feel the church treats people. Secular people generally feel that we treat people like expendable resources – which means that we're only interested in what we can get from people. This explains why the most common objection to the church is: "The church is always asking for money!" This is just another way of people saying, "All the church is interested in is what it can get out of me."

At McLean Bible Church, we are committed to being the kind of church that removes this

objection by valuing and serving people. Our goal is not to see how much we can get from people but to see how much we can give to people. We don't always get this perfect. No matter how hard we try, sometimes we hurt people and fail them. But when we do fail, we are authentically committed to accepting the responsibility for our failure, to asking people to forgive us, to making things right as best we can and to figuring out ways to do it in the future so that we don't repeat our failures.

## 2. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TRANSFORMS PEOPLE'S LIVES

The Bible declares (2 Corinthians 5:17): "If any person gives their life to Jesus Christ, they become a new person; old things pass away, new things come."

Our whole approach to ministry at McLean Bible Church is built around this one fundamental truth. We believe that when a person exhibits a genuine salvation response to the message of Jesus Christ, Almighty God begins to transform their life – from the inside out. In the Bible, Jesus compared this process to that of yeast leavening dough, which happens irresistibly,

overpoweringly and dramatically from the inside out. This is why we're not interested in presenting people with clever self-help schemes, or with self-enhancement programs, or with feel-good flattery or psychobabble – BECAUSE these things cannot transform a person's life. Only the biblical message of Jesus Christ, which leads people into a personal relationship with God Himself, can do that.

This is what we mean when we say that at McLean Bible Church, we don't offer people "religion." "Religion" is a bunch of rules and regulations aimed at helping people work their way into God's good graces. The Bible never offers people "religion" because religion doesn't transform people's lives. Only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ does that, which is why a personal relationship with Christ is what God offers people in the Bible and it's what we offer people at McLean Bible Church.

### 3. THE GOAL OF OUR MINISTRY IS TO TRANSFORM PEOPLE INTO FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus' parting challenge to the church as he ascended into heaven (Matthew 28:19-20) was for us to go and make DISCIPLES. Disciples of Jesus are made, not born. Disciples result from a deliberate process of skill training and spiritual formation that brings a follower of Jesus to a higher plane of spiritual dedication and loyalty.

At McLean Bible Church, we're not here to build a monument to ourselves. We're not here to build "Solomon's Temple." We're here to see people not only make a decision for Jesus Christ, but then to go on and become true men and women of God.

This is how we measure our success at McLean Bible Church. We don't measure success by the physical size of our building or the amount of the

offerings or the number of people on our staff. We measure success by the quality of disciples we build for Jesus Christ.

### 4. MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM MUST BE CARRIED OUT IN A RELEVANT WAY

The Apostle Paul said: "I have become all things to all people so by all possible means I might win some" (1 Corinthians 9:22b). What Paul was saying here is: "I figure out some way to make Jesus Christ relevant to every person I meet because I understand that this is the only way I can reach any of them."

We at McLean Bible Church have come to realize that there are untold numbers of secular people in Washington who do not think that God is bad. They don't think that the Bible or church is bad. They simply think all of this is irrelevant – that it has no bearing on their everyday lives.

Most people who aren't followers of Jesus are not truly rejecting Jesus. A person would have to be foolish to reject what Jesus is offering them, if they really understood it. What most of these people are rejecting is the modern church's lame and irrelevant portrayal of Jesus.

Our vision and challenge as a church is to bridge this gap – to help secular people appreciate and understand just how relevant Jesus Christ and the Bible really are! That's why, at McLean Bible Church, we often talk about current events and use film clips and contemporary music. That's why we don't use jargon or "Christianese", but we use language that people are used to hearing in the everyday marketplace. That's why we're always answering the questions "SO WHAT?" and "HOW?" We want people to understand that, as followers of Jesus, we're living in the same world they are and that Christianity and the Bible work in the world of the 21st century.

## 5. PEOPLE MUST BE TREATED GENTLY & RESPECTFULLY

There's a powerful dynamic that Peter writes about in his first letter: "Always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope that lies within you. BUT DO THIS WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT" (1 Peter 3:15).

This last phrase tells us about a major key to creating a church environment that is able to reach secular people. It tells us that to accomplish our mission, McLean Bible Church has to create a "safe place" for people.

- First, we have to be a "safe place" for followers of Jesus: where we can be real; where we can be honest about our struggles and problems; where we don't have to "paste on the plastic"; and where we can get genuine help and support instead of condemnation.
- Second, we have to be a "safe place" for people who have not yet made a commitment to Jesus: where they can sit and learn and process Biblical information; where they can work through their issues in making a commitment to Jesus; where they can come to a decision point for Christ without feeling pressured, judged, threatened or hurried.

This Core Value is about building a church family where all people can be honest and yet where we will still treat people with dignity, respect and courtesy in spite of their imperfections, doubts and struggles.

This is why we say, that at McLean Bible Church, we're out to be a "Hospital for Sinners, not a Museum for Saints."

## 6. PEOPLE NEED TO BE CONNECTED TO A CARING COMMUNITY

Simon and Garfunkel sang a song years ago entitled "Like a Bridge over Troubled Water." We believe that this is what God intended the church to be for people: a bridge over the troubled waters of life. God intended the church to provide a support system that helps people make it through the tough times.

We believe that having healthy, caring relationships with people is as crucial for our spiritual survival as food is for our physical survival. We believe that "it took people to make us sick and God uses people to make us well again."

For so many of us, it's when we first experience a loving, supporting, accepting community of Christian friends, that God is able to begin the healing process in our lives. And we not only need a place where we can receive this kind of love and support, but also a place where we can give it to others.

At McLean Bible Church, we try to create this kind of caring community in a variety of ways. But the primary way we seek to achieve it is by helping every person to get connected to a small group. We have thousands of people in a wide variety of groups. But we believe that our job is undone until we get every person who calls McLean Bible Church their home church into a small group, where they can be loved, cared for and supported – and where they do the same for others.

## 7. EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS A GOD-GIVEN MINISTRY

“Now to each one of us (who are followers of Jesus Christ) the manifestation of the Spirit (i.e. spiritual gifts) is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

We believe that every single follower of Jesus Christ has at least one spiritual gift. And if every follower of Jesus Christ has a spiritual gift, then each of us has an area of ministry for which God has gifted and designed us. What this means is that God wants every follower of Jesus to use their lives to make a difference for eternity.

But this Core Value also has a bearing for our church family as a whole. God’s plan for McLean Bible Church is that we be a “team.” And in order for us to achieve our mission of making an impact on secular Washington, we need every member of the team “on the field.” We need every team member to be exercising his/her gifts in an effort to help McLean Bible Church achieve the mission God has given us.

This is why we provide ongoing training and development services for the members of our church family in the areas of recognizing and learning to use their spiritual gifts.

## 8. EVERYTHING WE DO MUST BE DONE WITH EXCELLENCE

As followers of Jesus Christ, the Bible calls us to a dedication to excellence (Colossians 3:23-24). The reason for this is that we are serving the Lord Himself in every thing that we do, from the smallest task to the largest project.

However, this biblical principle also has enormous application to McLean Bible Church if we are serious about achieving our stated mission for God.

Living in Washington, DC, is like being in constant air combat: there are no prizes for second place! When secular people, who are accustomed to this level of excellence in every area of their everyday lives, walk into a church setting and see mediocrity and sloppiness, they immediately judge our “product” to be inferior.

The truth is – we have the best “product” in the history of the universe: a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In presenting this “product” to people, nothing less than our absolute best effort and performance is acceptable.

It is this kind of dedication to excellence in all that we do that lies at the very heart of the ministry of McLean Bible Church.

## 9. OUR CHURCH MUST HAVE AN EVANGELISTIC IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

In saying Core Value #9, all we’re saying is that we take seriously what Jesus Christ told us to do in the Bible. Jesus said to his first followers, who were living in Jerusalem at the time: “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and then to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus calls us to be a “FORCE” in our world, not a “FORTRESS”. And when it comes to being a “force” in our world, Jesus’ model is for us to begin right in our own community.

We believe that it is unacceptable for a church to exist in a community for years and, at the end of that time, to have made little or no impact for Christ on that community.

We believe that it is a travesty for churches to spend many thousands of dollars a year to support overseas missionary work and, at the same time, to expend virtually no energy to reach the people across the street from the church building.

We cannot control what people do with the message of Jesus Christ. But our calling is to make sure that every person living in the Washington metro area has the opportunity to respond to that message. In other words, our mission is to saturate the Washington area with the message of Christ and to do so in language that is intelligible and understandable. And this means the inner city as well as the suburbs.

As a church family, we're not going to be satisfied until every person in the metro area has had the opportunity to hear about, understand and respond to Jesus Christ's offer of forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

Every dollar our people give – every prayer our people pray – every hour our people serve at McLean Bible Church is dedicated to making this kind of impact on our world.

## 10. TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION WE MUST BE WILLING TO STEP OUT IN FAITH AND TAKE RISKS FOR GOD

One of the most searching verses in the entire Bible is Hebrews 11:6: "And without faith it is impossible to please God." The key word here is the word "impossible." The Bible does not say "improbable" or "unlikely" – it says "impossible."

Now this truth applies to the way church families conduct themselves just like it applies to how individuals conduct themselves. God delights in people who walk by faith.

As one of our staff members said: "If you want the fruit, you've got to be willing to go out on the limb – because that's where it is." And how right he is. No tree has fruit growing on the trunk! But as we all know, going out on the limb demands "risk." In other words, there's no way to exhibit faith without taking risk.

Here at McLean Bible Church, we tell folks: "If you hate risk, you don't want to be a part of this church!" The reason for saying this is that we're always about one nanometer away from total disaster here.

- We're not "foolhardy" – but we are "risk-takers" for God.
- We believe in "pushing the envelope" for Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the organizations and the people God uses are always the ones that are "leaning forward in the saddle." And this is the kind of church we're committed to being.

When the Lord shows us something that we believe He's calling us to do for Him, we step out in faith and take risk. And we believe that the Bible testifies to the fact that God's richest rewards are reserved for those people and those church families who are willing to live by faith like this.

## CONCLUSION

As McLean Bible Church, this is who we are and what we're about. Our target is to change Washington, DC, and the world – one life at a time!

If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, this is the vision we want you to buy into and become a part of. Life is too short to spend it doing something irrelevant. Becoming a "big shot", making lots of money, amassing lots of power, stockpiling lots of stuff – these are not relevant reasons for living. Changing people's lives and their eternal destinies IS! This is the exciting privilege that God has given us in the nation's capital. We invite you to come and join us in rocking this city for Jesus Christ.