



# Vision, Values and Virtues

## THE DIRECTION OF FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD

### OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT:

First Assembly of God is a Pentecostal church founded on the unshakable truths of God's inerrant Holy Word. We exist to include people in the celebration of God's real presence, develop individuals into mature followers of Christ, present Jesus Christ to a needy community, and be obedient to God's voice.

### I. OUR VISION – *Real People Serving a Real God in a Real Way*

A. **Our vision is captured in the statement, *Real People Serving a Real God in a Real Way*. This sets the stage for the overall activity of the church. The key verse in our understanding of this vision is:**

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place hands on sick people, and they will get well." Mark 16:15-18*

1. Real People -- God's Word says, "whosoever will may come." This church is comprised of ordinary people, serving an extraordinary God.
2. Real God – We recognize that God is more than a concept or ideal, and He is more than a detached being. He is genuine and desires to have a personal relationship with every individual.
3. A Real Way – When Jesus visited with the woman at the well (John 4), He told her that God desires worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. God is not simply a part of our life, we have given Him Lordship. Lordship simply means that He is the one in charge. (Galatians 2:20).

B. **Our vision, while articulated by the Senior Pastor, reflects much heart-felt prayer as he sought God to find out God's heart for our church. Once established the vision serves as a point of reference for all other activity in the church. The importance of finding God's vision for the church cannot be overstated.**

### **Food For Thought -- Imparted by God**

Vision for ministry is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through you to build his kingdom. Rather than rely upon the abilities of humans to concoct a view of, to plan for, the future, God conveys His view of that future to a leader. The future of the church and of the people whom God has placed on this earth are simply too important to Him to allow people to lean on their own innate abilities and talents to develop half-baked schemes for reaching the world. While He allows us ample latitude and creativity to articulate, disseminate and implement the vision, make no mistake about it: Visionary leaders receive their vision for ministry from God.

### **A Glimpse At History -- Azusa Street**

The early Pentecostals placed a strong emphasis on the leading of the Holy Spirit both in daily life and during worship services. The most prominent early Pentecostal revival occurred at the turn of the century from 1906 to 1909 at the

Azusa Street mission in Los Angeles, led by William J. Seymour. As the following excerpts show, the "glue" that held the revival meetings together was the moving of the Holy Spirit.

An article from the Azusa Street revival proclaimed:

*All who are in touch with God realize as soon as they enter the meetings that the Holy Ghost is the leader.*

As the leader of the Azusa Street revival Brother Seymour was totally committed to being led by the Holy Spirit:

*Brother Seymour was recognized as the nominal leader in charge. But we had no pope or hierarchy... The Lord himself was leading... We did not even have a platform or a pulpit in the beginning. All were on a level. The ministers were servants, according to the true meaning of the word.*

Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoe boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meetings, in prayer.

**C. It is clear that the Holy Spirit guided the activities of the New Testament church.**

*Acts 8:29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."*

*Acts 10:19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you."*

*Acts 15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:*

*Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

## **II. OUR VALUES**

When people walk in right relationship with God, four qualities are present, which are reflected in the four values of the church. All four are necessary. They are not the same or interchangeable. The omission of one value cannot be shored up by extra emphasis on another value. These values represent the core of soul of First Assembly of God. While our methods (the *ways* of doing ministry), will be continuously changing, our values must never change.

### **OUR FOUR VALUES**

1. *Scripture.* We value the Bible as God's rule of faith and practice and will endeavor to live in a growing relationship with God through our practice of biblical faith.
2. *Prayer.* We value prayer as the means of communicating with God on our behalf and as intercession for others. We further believe that prayer is essential for guidance and to secure the blessing of God in our lives and ministry. Every ministry of significance is energized by God through the prayers of His people.
3. *Anointing.* We value God's power to accomplish what would be impossible by our own efforts. This "anointing" is essential for effective ministry.
4. *People.* People matter to us because people matter to God.

These four are intertwined. Each depends on the other if we are to be effective in life and service. They further underscore the prevailing attitudes and actions that are most important in our church. They might be captured in the following questions on which we can evaluate both our activities and our relationships: Is it scriptural? Is it prayerful? Is it powerful? Is it honorable?

These values which characterize *Real People Serving a Real God in a Real Way* are:

- Intertwined but not interchangeable. One cannot substitute for another.
- Essential. All four will be present in spiritually healthy individuals and groups.
- The following verses underscore the importance of our values:

### **Scripture:**

*2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

*2 Tim 3:17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

### **Prayer:**

*John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

### **Anointing:**

*Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,*

*Luke 4:19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

### **People:**

*Luke 10:27 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself."*

*1 John 4:7-8 "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*

## **III. OUR VIRTUES**

Our virtues are the godly qualities that must characterize our relationships. Drawn from scripture, they provide the basic code of conduct for those who find a home at First Assembly of God. What follows is a list of our ten virtues.

### **1. Love. Demonstrating Commitment For The Highest Good Of Others.**

- We demonstrate *agape*, or unconditional love for one another.
- We act in the best interest of others.
- We acknowledge that God's love working among us is the greatest single feature of our relationships.

*Col 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

*John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

### **2. Honesty. Integrity In Speech, Motive And Conduct.**

- Our speech and actions are marked by an honesty tempered by love.
- We say the same thing to everyone about a given issue that is not confidential.
- We level with each other in plain talk. We are aboveboard and straightforward.
- Telling the truth is not punished.
- Lying and deception are never acceptable.
- Honesty means that we "walk our talk."
- We will not do anything about which we may later have to be deceitful.
- We make and keep promises.
- We don't apologize for the truth.
- We candidly evaluate everything we do.

*Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

*Mat 5:37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*

*Prov 12:22 The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.*

### **3. Trust. Confidence In One Another.**

- Trust is dependent on honesty. With honesty comes trust.
- Trust and intimacy function together.
- We place people in positions of responsibility who have demonstrated trustworthiness.
- We grant freedom to experiment and even fail without being blamed.
- We are open. We are willing to share with one another. We are receptive to one another.
- We do not avoid one another during times of difficulty.

*2 Tim 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

### **4. Servanthood. Placing Priority On The Needs Of Others.**

- We esteem service over self-interest. We go out of our way to help one another.
- We do not engage in "internal politics" which can kill the spirit of a church.
- We use positions of ministry to serve others, instead of "lording over" others in a misuse of power.

- We recognize that when we stay in step with the Holy Spirit others are served and we reach our fullest potential as servant of God and people.

*Matthew 23:11 The greatest among you will be your servant.*

#### **5. Availability. Doing What Is Necessary.**

- We acknowledge that "No job is beneath me."
- As servants, we get the job done, even if it is "not my job".
- Because we make ourselves available, we care about all areas of the church, even those areas in which we may not be significantly involved.

**John 13:5 After that, poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.**

#### **6. Unity. Believing And Acting In Agreement.**

- Our unity is based on our Vision, Values and Virtues.
- Our unity is reinforced by clearly set goals for the church as a whole and for individual ministries.
- We set and commit to clear and elevating goals that have been derived from practicing our vision, values and virtues.

*Psa 133:1 A song of ascents. Of David. How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!*

*Eph 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

*Prov 29:18 (KJV) Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

#### **7. Excellence. Doing The Best Possible Job.**

- We equate excellence with the fulfillment of our vision.
- We believe that ministry done with low standards is unacceptable and not worth doing.
- We emphasize excellence because we care deeply about God and people.
- We evaluate ourselves for the purpose of improving.

*Mark 7:37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said...*

*Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,*

*1 Th 5:21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.*

#### **8. Diversity. Valuing Differences Among Ourselves.**

- We prize unity without demanding uniformity. If our Vision, Values and Virtues line up, then variety in personalities, ministries and styles is a strength.
- We grant the freedom for different ministries to operate in different manners.

*Rom 12:4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,*

*Rom 12:5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

#### **9. Discernment. Wisdom In Decision Making.**

- We endeavor to follow the Spirit when making decisions.
- We submit our ideas and promptings to others for confirmation.
- We stick to our Vision, Values and Virtues in making decisions and relating to people.
- We respect one another.
- We are sensitive to the differences between individuals and groups and endeavor to respond accordingly.

*Prov 2:9 Then you will understand what is right and just and fair--every good path.*

#### **10. Partnership. Living In Active Fellowship With One Another.**

- We view all Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We listen and respond to the needs of those to whom we are endeavoring to minister.
- Our relationships are marked by mutual love and respect.

*Rom 14:19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.*

*Acts 15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...*

*Phil 1:17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.*

The church has been given a mandate: to honor God and serve people. We live in a time of significant and dramatic change. As our culture continues to change the methodology of the church must change with it. Our message however has never and must never change. We proclaim Jesus Christ as the answer!