

STATEMENT OF FAITH  
**What we *believe* at CAFO**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen

\*Our Statement of Faith is taken directly from the Nicene Creed.

\*\*The term catholic (small "c") in the Nicene Creed does not refer to the Catholic Church, but to the global Christian church. It expresses the belief of the early Christians and believers ever since that there is a shared identity and fellowship of God's people throughout history and across the world.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# Our approach to a *Gospel-centered* mission

### **God's Heart and Ours**

God is vested, deeply and personally, in the plight of orphaned and vulnerable children—and in all who are destitute and defenseless (Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 10:14; Psalm 68:5-6; Isaiah 58:5-12). God calls His people to reflect His special love for these children in both word and deed (Isaiah 1:17; James 1:27; Matthew 25:40).

### **Responsive Love**

To act upon God's call to care for orphans is not merely a matter of duty, guilt or idealism. It is first a response to the good news, the Gospel: that God, our loving Father, sought us, adopted us, and invites us to live as His sons and daughters (John 1:12; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:15; 1 John 3:1). We love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

### **Well-Informed Action**

Good intentions alone are insufficient. All care for children must be guided by both knowledge and wisdom (Proverbs 19:2; Philippians 1:9-11). In our broken world, no solution will be without flaws. Yet our aim must always be to offer the excellent care we'd desire to give Jesus himself – informed by Scripture and the best available research, knowledge and proven practice.

### **Commitment to the Whole Child**

To meet only spiritual or only physical needs is incomplete (1 John 3:17; James 2:16; Mark 8:36). Christian love seeks to address both, just as Jesus always did. Nothing is of greater value than to know Jesus Christ and one's identity as a child of God (Philippians 3:8). Yet even a cup of water given to a thirsty child is of eternal worth (Matthew 10:42).

### **Priority of Family**

Both Scripture and social science affirm that the best environment for children is a safe, permanent family. When this is not possible, the goal for each child should be – as a general rule – to move as far as possible along the “spectrum of care” toward permanent family. Care for children should always be as *safe, nurturing* and as *close to family* as is feasible for the given situation.

## **Family Preservation**

Children having a surviving parent, or other relatives willing to care for them, should be helped to remain with family whenever safely possible. Likewise, when families have been separated, reunification is of first priority whenever safely possible. Efforts made to keep struggling families together are a vital part of the Bible's call to care for orphans and widows in distress (James 1:27).

## **Residential Care**

Care within a family is our unequivocal ideal for children. Yet we also honor the devoted care and protection provided by many quality residential facilities. We further recognize that therapeutic group settings can play an essential role in the healing of children with intensive needs. We urge that new programs prioritize family-based care. We encourage existing residential programs to grow as close as feasible to the ideal of family, and to promote family-based solutions whenever possible.

## **Centrality of the Local Church**

The local church in every nation possesses both the Christian mandate and many other resources needed to care for the world's orphans in a nurturing, relationship-rich environment. Every initiative to care for orphans should prioritize and honor the role of the local church, carefully pairing what foreign resources may be necessary with local believers willing to open their hearts and homes to orphans in their community.

## **Unity**

Scripture overflows with calls for unity in the Body of Christ (Psalm 133; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 3:11-15; Philippians 4:1-3). Such unity yields special strength (Ecclesiastes 4:9), welcomes the presence of Christ (Matt. 18:20) and confirms that Jesus was sent by God (John 17:20-23). Disagreements are inevitable and sometimes even necessary. Yet amidst all that strains unity, we commit to honoring each other above ourselves (Romans 12:10) – and labor in unison to see every child experience God's unfailing love.

CORE COMMITMENTS

Together we are *committed* to:

**Love God**

Love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, seeking to grow daily as earnest disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Love Our Neighbor**

Love our neighbor as ourselves, seeking good for every individual as one made in God's image and bearing profound dignity, regardless of any trait, choice or history.

**Honor Scripture**

Honor Scripture by holding it as our highest authority and guide against which all other claims are weighed.

**Uphold and Strengthen Family**

Uphold and strengthen family as God's provision for the nurture of children, and the lifelong covenant of marriage between a father and a mother as God's design for the stability and flourishing of families.

**Respect Government**

Respect government by following all laws, as long as they do not require violation of conscience, and by encouraging policies that allow people of faith to maintain their convictions as they serve others.

## 7 Standards of Responsible Stewardship

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### **Standard 1 – Doctrinal Statement**

Every member shall subscribe to a written statement of faith clearly affirming its commitment to the evangelical Christian faith and shall conduct its financial and other operations in a manner which reflects those generally accepted biblical truths and practices.

### **Standard 2 – Board of Directors & Financial Oversight**

Every member shall be governed by a responsible board of not less than five individuals, a majority of whom shall be independent, which shall meet at least semiannually to establish policy and review its accomplishments. The board or a committee consisting of a majority of independent members shall review the annual financial statements and maintain direct communication between the board and the independent certified/chartered accountants.

### **Standard 3 – Financial Statements**

Each member is required to annually present to their board complete and accurate financial statements that are either compiled or reviewed by an independent certified/chartered accountant.

### **Standard 4 – Use of Resources**

Every member shall exercise the management and financial controls necessary to provide reasonable assurance that all resources are used (nationally and internationally) in conformity with applicable local and national laws and regulations to accomplish the purposes for which they are intended.

### **Standard 5 – Financial Disclosure**

Every member shall provide to their board a copy of its current financial statements upon written request and provide other disclosures as the law may require. A member must provide its board a report, on request, including financial information, on any specific project for which it is soliciting gifts.

### **Standard 6 – Conflicts of Interest**

Every member shall avoid conflicts of interest. Transactions with related parties may be undertaken only if all of the following are observed: 1) a material transaction is fully disclosed in the financial statements of the member; 2) the related party is excluded from the discussion and approval of such transaction; 3) a competitive bid or comparable valuation exists; and 4) the member's board has acted upon and demonstrated that the transaction is in the best interest of the member.

## Standard 7 – Fund-Raising

Every member shall comply with each of the ECFA Standards for fund-raising:

**7.1 Truthfulness in Communication:** All representations of fact, description of financial condition of the member, or narrative about events must be current, complete, and accurate. References to past activities or events must be appropriately dated. There must be no material omissions or exaggerations of fact or use of misleading photographs or any other communication which would tend to create a false impression or misunderstanding.

**7.2 Communication and Donor Expectations:** Fund-raising appeals must not create unrealistic donor expectations of what a donor's gift will actually accomplish within the limits of the member's ministry.

**7.3 Communication and Donor Intent:** All statements made by the member in its fund-raising appeals about the use of the gift must be honored by the member. The donor's intent is related both to what was communicated in the appeal and to any donor instructions accompanying the gift. The member should be aware that communications made in fund-raising appeals may create a legally binding restriction.

**7.4 Projects Unrelated to a Ministry's Primary Purpose:** A member raising or receiving funds for programs that are not part of its present or prospective ministry, but are proper in accordance with its purpose, must either treat them as restricted funds and channel them through an organization that can carry out the donor's intent or return the funds to the donor.

**7.5 Incentives and Premiums:** Members making fund-raising appeals which, in exchange for a contribution, offer premiums or incentives (the value of which is not insubstantial, but is significant in relation to the amount of the donation) must advise the donor of the fair market value of the premium or incentive.

**7.6 Financial Advice:** The representative of the member, when dealing with persons regarding commitments on major estate assets, must seek to guide and advise donors so they have adequately considered the broad interests of the family and the various ministries they are currently supporting before they make final decisions. Donors should be encouraged to use the services of their attorneys, accountants, or other professional advisors.

**7.7 Percentage Compensation for Fund-raisers:** Compensation of outside fund-raising consultants or a member's own employees based directly or indirectly on a percentage of charitable contributions raised is not allowed.

**7.8 Donated Gifts for a Named Recipient's Personal Benefit:** Donated gifts may not be used to pass money or benefits to any named individual for personal use.

**7.9 Conflict of Interest on Royalties:** An officer, director, or other principal of the member must not receive royalties for any product that the member uses for fund-raising or promotional purposes.

**7.10 Acknowledgement of Gifts-in-Kind:** Property or gifts-in-kind received by a member should be acknowledged describing the property or gift accurately without a statement of the gift's market value. It is the responsibility of the donor to determine the fair market value of the property. The member may be required to provide additional information for gifts of motor vehicles, boats, and airplanes.

**7.11 Acting in the Interest of the Donor:** A member must make every effort to avoid accepting a gift from or entering into a contract with a prospective donor which would knowingly place a hardship on the donor, or place the donor's future well-being in jeopardy.

## MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

### 1. Shared Vision, Mission and Goals

The undersigned hereby understands and affirms the following:

#### IDENTITY

Before anything we achieve, in Christ we are beloved sons and daughters of God, and so we unite first as a community of Christian spiritual formation, seeking to grow more like Jesus together each day – confident that healthy trees bear good fruit (Matthew 7:17).

#### VISION

To see the people of God overflowing with the love of God, so that every orphaned and vulnerable child will experience God's unfailing love in a thriving family.

#### MISSION

We unite an alliance in shared initiatives that inspire and equip God's people to care effectively for vulnerable children and families, rooted always in Christian discipleship and the life of the local church.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

CAFO's work aims to directly cultivate three primary ends:

- **Thriving Leaders** -- Christians growing more like Jesus each day, able to persevere in their calling, and producing "fruit that will remain" because they are rooted deeply in Him and healthy in body, intellect, emotions, relationships and spiritual life.
- **Excellent Practice** -- The actions of Christians guided by the best available knowledge.
- **Collaborative Communities** -- Organizations, churches, and leaders laboring with strong connection to and communication with one another -- often in coordinated action -- rooted in shared commitment to Jesus Christ.

**BETTER TOGETHER Vision** Every child in a loving family, embraced within a collaborative community

#### BETTER TOGETHER Shared Goals

To mobilize churches, organizations, and advocates by:

- Collaborating to enable family and community-based care
- Partnering with churches to inspire and support Christians in action
- Cultivating competency with evidence-based approaches and best practices



## **2. Alliance Statement of Faith and Core Principles**

The undersigned has read and affirms CAFO's *Statement of Faith, Guiding Principles, Core Commitments*, and *7 Standards of Responsible Stewardship* attached to this document.

## **3. Global Network Criteria and Standards**

The undersigned has read, affirms and agrees with all Global Network criteria and standards. The undersigned further agrees that it will maintain compliance with all such criteria and standards as a condition for continued membership in the Global Network.

## **4. Commitment to Promoting Unity and Biblical Conflict Resolution**

A core part of the Global Network's mission is to cultivate unity in the body of Christ. The undersigned commits to following the Bible's clear call to make every effort to live in peace, unity and mutual respectfulness with one another and all people. If conflicts arise, CAFO members commit to do all within their power to resolve them in private and/or with the guidance of wise fellow believers, consistent with the Biblical injunctions of Matthew 5:22-24, Matthew 18:15-20, and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

## **5. Use CAFO logo or name is not permitted.**

Any use of the CAFO logo, or any other CAFO logos, including the name Christian Alliance for Orphans and/or CAFO, is not permitted without prior written authorization.

\*The electronic submission of a membership application or renewal serves as your network's signature affirming all of these items.