

*NORTHSIDE
BIBLE CHAPEL*

*Basic Beliefs
and
Operating Principles*

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**Northside Bible Chapel
Basic Beliefs and Operating Principles**

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Our Vision

That in all things He might have the pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18) in our worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship and evangelism.

Our Mission

We seek to glorify Christ in worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship and evangelism. We will faithfully serve Him by encouraging and building up God's people and by effectively reaching out to the unbeliever both locally and worldwide.

Our Five Pillars

1. Worship
2. Prayer
3. Teaching
4. Fellowship
5. Evangelism

Basic Beliefs

We meet together as Christians who gather in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:20). A complete statement of faith is found in the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The following provides a brief summary of some of the important truths in which we believe.

About the Bible

The Bible, consisting of both the Old and New Testaments, is the revealed word of God. It was given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16), and written by men as they were guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). It is free of error in the original writings and is our soul authority on all matters of doctrine and conduct.

About God

There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) who eternally exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The three persons of the Godhead are distinct, yet are co-equal one with the other (Ephesians 4:4-6, Hebrews 9:14). God is spirit: invisible, personal, self-existent, eternal, and unchanging.

About God the Father

God the Father is holy and cannot overlook or be associated with evil in any way. God is love (1 John 4:8) and has shown His love and mercy to all people by sending His Son, the Lord Jesus, to earth to pay the penalty of sin (1 John 4:10). God the Father was fully satisfied with the life and death of His Son and to demonstrate this, He raised the Lord Jesus from

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the dead (Acts 3:15). Since the price of sin has been paid, the believer can enter God's holy presence on the basis of the Lord Jesus' sacrifice. God is not limited or localized by time and space: however, His throne or place of administration is in Heaven (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 7:48-49).

About God the Son

God the Son entered human history as the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16). He was born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35) having been supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20). While here upon earth, He was, in one person, both truly God and truly man (John 10:30). He lived a perfect and sinless life and then died on the cross, having offered Himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins (1 Peter 2:24). He rose bodily from the dead (Luke 24:39), ascended to His Father's right hand in heaven (Ephesians 1:20) and appears there as our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16, 9:24).

About God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is a divine person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come (John 16:7-11). He indwells, seals and places in the body of Christ, all believers (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:30). He is the Comforter (John 14:16-18) and He instructs believers in the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:26, 15:26-27) to equip and empower them for service.

About Mankind

Adam was created by God in a state of innocence. By a deliberate act, he sinned and, thereby, incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God (Romans 5:12). All his descendants are born into the world as sinners and are sinners in thought, word, and deed. A restored relationship with God has been achieved by God Himself who provided His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Saviour (Romans 5:10-11). The Lord Jesus shed His most precious blood for the forgiveness of sin. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith in the Lord Jesus. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of man (Titus 3:5; Romans 8:9). All believers are eternally saved and all who reject Him are eternally lost (John 3:36). The Bible teaches the eternal security of the believer (John 10:27-28; 2 Timothy 1:12).

About Marriage

Marriage is a divine institution (Genesis 2:22; Mark 10:9). We believe that marriage, as ordained by God, brings together two people of the opposite sex in an exclusive relationship (Genesis 2:24). This is also confirmed in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:4-5). Marriage is a God-

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sealed covenant which binds a couple together in what God intends to be a permanent bond (Mark 10:9). It follows that:

- † A sexual relationship outside of marriage is sin (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:9; Hebrews 13:4);
- † Any other relationship, as in same sex union, is totally anti-scriptural and is prohibited by the Bible (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; Jude 7); and
- † Divorce is not a God-ordained, morally neutral option, but a result of pride and selfishness, which calls for repentance and change (Malachi 2:16; Mark 10:2-9).

About Satan

The Bible teaches the existence of Satan, the archenemy of God and His people. He was defeated through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Hebrew 2:14). His work is to discourage mankind from faith in Christ and to make the believer stumble. He is doomed to the eternal Lake of Fire for all eternity (Ephesians 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:2).

About the Church

The church, the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), is composed of all persons who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal and only Saviour. All believers are incorporated into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and have become members of that body (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 1:2) The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Ephesians 5:22-32), and directs the activities of the church on earth. We believe those activities are to carry out the work of:

- † The preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:17). We therefore oppose any deviation, dilution or perversion of it (Galatians 1:6-8);
- † Teaching and promoting the essential Biblical doctrines and practices of the New Testament church (1 Timothy 3:15);
- † Propagating the practical living out of true Christian values based on what we understand to be the proper interpretation of God's word and honouring its authority in our lives. We,

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therefore, seek to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Psalm 119:9, 105; Luke 4:4; John 15:3; 17:17);

- † Supporting and adhering to the doctrines of the Bible regarding family life and sexuality; and
- † Preaching the necessity of living the clear Biblical practices of a holy life (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Accordingly, we do not condone the denial of God's existence and refusal of His claims on His creatures (i.e., Atheism or rejection of the Gospel) or indulgence in worldly lusts whether they be materialism (i.e., the love of money and the lust for power (1 John 2:15-17)), substance abuse (Ephesians 5:18), dishonesty in any form (e.g., cheating, fraud and laziness), child abuse in any form, sexual immorality, same sex relationships or the use of foul, profane or obscene language.

About the Future

At any moment, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may return for His Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). This event will be followed by a period of severe hardship on the earth called the Great Tribulation. This period will culminate in the return to the earth of our Lord Jesus Christ with His saints and the establishment of His 1000 year kingdom of peace.

There will be a bodily resurrection of all people, everlasting blessing for the believer, and everlasting, conscious punishment for the non-believer (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15).

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

It is considered important that the objectives, ministries, and operating principles of Northside Bible Chapel be understood by those who are part of the assembly. This booklet seeks to provide information on these topics but cannot deal in detail with every item. Further clarification on any topic may be obtained from one of the elders.

New Testament Pattern

The word "church" is a religious word which was coined to describe a Christian congregation or meeting place. The New Testament word translated "church" has no such religious connotation. It refers to a group of people who were called out, as for example, the citizens of a town for a public gathering. The English word which probably best approximates the meaning of the Greek term is "assembly."

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It is necessary that a local assembly give prayerful consideration to the teaching of the New Testament as to its purpose, activities and organization, recognizing that:

- † The New Testament does not attempt to cover every detail relating to assembly practice. Indeed, it may well be that the New Testament is deliberately silent on certain issues which may be handled differently depending upon the culture, the local situation, the composition of the assembly, etc;
- † Much of what the New Testament contains relating to assembly order is in reference to the practices of early churches rather than in specific commandments; and
- † There is considerable diversity of opinion among Christians on the operating practices of the local assembly, but each assembly must take its stand on what it believes to be Biblical and appropriate.

We believe what was taught in the Gospels, practiced by the early church and expounded in the Epistles is the correct pattern to be followed by this assembly.

Objectives

The objectives of the assembly may be summarized as follows:

- † Godward - to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21);
- † Inward - to promote spiritual growth in the life of each individual (Ephesians 4:12), providing scope for individuals to develop and exercise spiritual gifts (Romans 12:4-8); and
- † Outward - to reach others with the gospel, locally and elsewhere (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 1: 8).

Fellowship

All believers in the Lord Jesus are members of the church universal which is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12-13). In New Testament times, the local assembly in a community was a visible, recognizable entity which met for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20-34), prayer (Acts 4:31), and teaching (Acts 20:7).

It clearly was the practice for believers to:

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- † identify with a local assembly;
- † recognize those who were elders and deacons within that assembly (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1);
- † accept the discipline which was exercised (1 Corinthians 5:1-13);
and
- † give expression to the fellowship they shared in meeting together and sharing together in a variety of privileges and responsibilities; e.g., in the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17), prayers (Acts 2:42), service (Philippians 1:5; 4:3), and giving (Galatians 6:6; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

All true Christians are called on by God to lead a life of discretion and modesty in their appearance (Colossians 3:12-13), actions (1 Peter 1:14-15) and language (Ephesians 4:29). Therefore, we expect those in fellowship in this assembly to observe these basic Christian values. In light of these clear instructions, we will not tolerate or condone foul language, child abuse in any form, same sex activities, adultery or any sexual immorality or the appearance of such (Ephesians 5:1-4).

Anyone who desires to be in fellowship in this assembly must clearly confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, identify with Him in baptism, be living in obedience to God's word (John 14:23; 15:14) and walking in a godly manner (Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:1-2). After a brief interview with the elders, your name will be presented to the whole of the assembly for their approval. Should no objection be made, you will be received into the fellowship on the next Lord's Day. In the case of believers moving into the area from another assembly, a letter of commendation would be appreciated from the former fellowship. All those received into fellowship are announced at the Lord's Supper. This announcement clearly expresses to all the desire the individual has in sharing in the life of this assembly (Romans 15:7; 16:2). Any individual with personal convictions that could cause division amongst believers within the local fellowship must not promote those convictions as being doctrine, but hold those convictions to him or her self (Romans 16:17-18).

Ordinances

The ordinances are those practices of the assembly specifically ordained and commanded of God. They are twofold:

- † **Believers' Baptism** involves immersion in water (Acts 8:38) and is a public confession by a believer of their identification with the

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Lord Jesus. It was commanded by the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20), practiced by the early church (Acts 8:36-38) and explained by the apostles as symbolizing the identification of the believer with the Lord Jesus in death and resurrection (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). Candidates for baptism are expected to be mature enough to explain their experience of salvation and understand the implications of baptism, i.e. identifying oneself with Christ in a world that has rejected Him.

Those requesting baptism are encouraged to also consider fellowship in the assembly; and

† **The Lord's Supper** is celebrated on the first day of each week (Acts 20:7). Since our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, requested that we should celebrate this supper in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34), it should be the desire of all those in fellowship to attend this meeting. Visiting believers are welcome upon their presenting a letter of introduction from another assembly, upon their being introduced by a believer known to those in this assembly or upon their confession of faith in the Lord Jesus.

The meeting takes the form of spontaneous expressions of worship in prayers, hymns, reading, expounding of the scriptures (1 Corinthians 14:26) and partaking of the emblems (bread and cup).

We all should come with prepared hearts to worship. We would encourage our brethren to participate in the giving out of a hymn, in the offering of worship through prayer, and in sharing a meditation on the person and work of Christ.

Church Government

A New Testament assembly of believers stands accountable to our Lord Jesus Christ alone, as an autonomous unit which owes no allegiance to any ecclesiastical system established and controlled by men. However, there is a prescribed pattern for leadership within a local assembly, involving both elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1).

Elders

The elders, or under shepherds, are directly responsible to the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, for teaching, counseling, discipline, and correction in spiritual matters pertaining to those who have been received into assembly fellowship (1 Peter 5:2-4; Hebrews 13:17).

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Leadership of an assembly is the responsibility of a plurality of male elders (1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:5-7), also described as overseers, pastors (Ephesians 4:11) and leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24). For example, the elders in the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17) were overseers who were to shepherd the assembly (Acts 20:28).

Elders are responsible to shepherd the people of God (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28). This involves feeding (Acts 20:28), guarding (Acts 20:31), supporting (Acts 20:35), guiding by exhortation (Titus 1:9) and example (1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7). They meet regularly to pray and to discuss issues relating to the assembly. Individuals in the assembly with concerns about personal or assembly related matters are encouraged to speak with one of the elders or to request a meeting with one or more of them.

Elders are appointed by God (Acts 20:28), but are to be recognized, esteemed (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13) and obeyed (Hebrews 13:17) by those in the assembly. The elders are sensitive to the growth and activities of men in the assembly with the intention of recognizing others who are doing the work and have the necessary qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). Anyone in fellowship in the assembly may suggest a brother to be considered. The elders will discuss all suggestions and, if they concur and the brother agrees, his name will be announced to the assembly for consideration. The elders will make the final decision on the recognition of a new elder.

If anyone in assembly fellowship has an exercise about a Bible study, outreach program or any other activity, they first should contact the elders for guidance.

Deacons

Deacons are those appointed to perform a particular service within the assembly. The nature of the service may be spiritual, e.g., teaching (Acts 6:4; Ephesians 3:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11) or practical (Acts 6:2-3). Therefore, those responsible for the leadership or coordination of the various assembly activities, including the administration of financial matters, are performing the work of deacons.

Deacons are appointed by the elders, taking into account the spiritual qualifications that are required (1 Timothy 3:8-13). Anyone in fellowship in the assembly may suggest the name of an individual for consideration for a particular service (Acts 6:3).

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Participation

All those in fellowship have a responsibility to support the work of the assembly in accordance with the gifts they have been given (1 Corinthians 12:1-14; Ephesians 4:7-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:3-8). Elders have the responsibility of arranging for public participation in teaching, but since the Bible teaches that not all have the same gifts, they are not obligated to ask every one to participate in a public way. They are required to provide opportunities for gifts to be revealed and developed.

Men's Participation

In those meetings where there is opportunity for spontaneous participation, the men are encouraged to audibly present worship, praise, exhortation and prayer. In doing this, each one should show consideration for others.

Women's Ministry

The ministry of the women includes children's activities, ladies' Bible studies, outreach activities for ladies, ladies' missionary classes, hospitality, counseling and visitation. Involvement in meetings of the assembly may be in the form of solos, duets, and reports on ladies' activities. However, a woman is not to exercise authority over the man. This precludes her leading the congregation in prayer and assuming the role of a teacher in the assembly gatherings (1 Timothy 2:8, 11-12). This subjection to God's designed order is manifested by the wearing of a head covering in meetings of the assembly where both men and women are present (1 Corinthians 11:1-16).

Finances

Each believer is responsible as a steward of God for all that they have and, as such, should, out of love to the Lord and as an act of worship, give to Him financially (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 16:1-2). The Biblical principle in giving is that it should be done worshipfully (Philippians 4:18), voluntarily, liberally, cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), regularly and proportionately as God has prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2).

An offering is received from believers at the Lord's Supper. Envelopes are made available and a number assigned for recording purposes for those wishing receipts for income tax purposes. The amounts given throughout the year are recorded using the assigned number. This information is provided to the treasurer who issues the annual receipts at the end of the calendar year.

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Those who wish to recommend that their gift be used for a particular purpose should enclose a note with their offering requesting that consideration be given to the suggestion. In the event that it is not considered appropriate to use the funds in the manner suggested, the funds will be returned to the donor or used for another purpose with the consent of the donor.

The assembly must approve the retention of funds for any specific purpose (e.g., capital expenditures), the amounts involved and the manner of setting the funds aside. Recommendations regarding distribution for each ministry are prepared each year by those responsible for that ministry and included by the treasurer in the annual budget. The budget is reviewed by the elders and submitted to the assembly at the annual meeting for approval.

A financial statement for the calendar year is prepared and made available at the Annual Meeting to those in fellowship.

Missions

The assembly is committed to the support of missions at home and abroad. The primary attention is to people commended from Canadian assemblies. Individuals are encouraged to be involved in assembly mission projects. The purpose of such involvement is to further the work of the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20).

Every Christian is exhorted in the Scriptures to serve the Lord in various ways. This behaviour should be evident, to the assembly, in the life of anyone desiring to serve the Lord in any mission project.

The term 'short-term service' is used to describe a number of opportunities to serve the Lord in various capacities and time periods. These opportunities can increase a person's awareness of missions and provide additional avenues for Christian service. Students, retired persons and others may go to assist a mission for a few weeks or months and be engaged in preaching and teaching or construction and other technical support. Some may go to assist during times of natural disasters or other overwhelming needs.

Some mission assignments require special recognition. This may be due to the nature and scope of the work, its location or qualifications required. This may lead to commendation.

Commendation to Christian service is an action in which those in the local assembly:

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- † recognize the call of God to individuals in their fellowship (Acts 13:2);
- † have some understanding of the work to be undertaken (Acts 13:1; 14:26);
- † know the worker(s) and the qualifications for the work (Acts 16:2);
- † express fellowship and oneness with the worker(s) going forth (Acts 13:3);
- † hand the worker(s) over to the Lord for His blessing (Acts 14:26; 15:40); and
- † maintain an on-going interest in the worker(s) and the work (Acts 14:27).

In view of the above, it is desirable that those considering mission type service, whether of a short-term or long-term nature, should do so in consultation with the elders.

MSC Canada is a service organization, which forwards funds to assembly commended missionaries around the world. Anyone wishing to send money to missionaries, in addition to those supported by the assembly, may use MSC Canada for this purpose. Further information may be obtained from MSC's web site at www.msc.on.ca.