

NON-NEGOTIABLE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF NORTHSIDE CALVARY CHURCH

Adopted May 2007

Seeing as the world in which we live, being led by the prince of darkness and driven by the desires of sinful flesh, is constantly in flux and antagonistic to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), the board of Northside Calvary Church has chosen to establish in printed policy the following Biblical principles. As the Lord Jesus commanded us to build our house upon a rock (Matthew 7:24-27), these tenets are the rock upon which the ministry of this church is founded. They are foundational to Scripture and ministry, and thus are non-negotiable:

1. A high view of God

Since ages past it has been the character of man to drift into egocentricity, leaving the things of God as an afterthought, diminishing the attributes of God and elevating the sovereignty of man. This is in direct contrast to the revealed Word of God and its declaration of God. For example, God declares through the prophet Isaiah, "To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with Him?" (Isaiah 40:18) And again, "'To whom then will you compare Me, that I should be like him?' says the Holy One" (Isaiah 40:25). The Lord declares, "Is there a God besides Me? There is no rock; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:8).

Since God is incomparable, we must ensure that we uphold Him and each of His attributes at all times. We must ensure that we never infringe upon God's glory. For example, that means we will not minimize His holiness in order to increase our comfort; we will not reduce His sovereignty to satisfy our selfishness and pride. If there is ever any question, we must revert to God as revealed in the Scriptures, not the subjectivity of man. We will not place the Creator in the proverbial "box"—He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, sovereign, holy, just, and loving. We will uphold Him.

Scriptures: Leviticus 11:44; Psalm 86:15, 100:3, 103:10-12; Isaiah 6:3, 40, 44:8, 46:8-13; 1 Peter 1:16

2. A sufficient view of the Scriptures

We live in a world in virtual denial of absolutes. In such a world, there must be a standard. The only accurate and unwavering standard is the living Word of God. It is His revelation to mankind, and as such we will uphold it as the only standard by which we live. We uphold the Scriptures as the revelation of God to mankind through the fathers, the prophets, and His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2), and thus it is the only authoritative standard for life and godliness.

God's Word is completely sufficient for us: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3). It is also of utmost necessity in the lives of those who are His: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Thus, there is no need for us to attach worldly thoughts and vain philosophy to God's Word (Colossians 2:8). The Scriptures are the only benchmark for truth (John 17:17) and are thereby singly necessary for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). They are our guide in life (Psalm 119:105) and the pattern for discipline when we wander away from obedience to the Lord (Hebrews 12:3-11). We will uphold the authority, sufficiency, inerrancy, and immutability of the Word of the Living God.

Scriptures: Psalm 119:105; Matthew 4:4, 5:17-18; John 17:17; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12, 12:3-11; 2 Peter 1:3, 1:16-21

3. A biblical view of man

A biblical view of man begins in the Garden of Eden with the rebellion of Adam and Eve against the Creator. In their sin, our first parents relegated the rest of the human race into eternal death, misery, and destruction. As a result, man does not naturally believe in God, nor can he do anything that pleases Him (Romans 3:10-12). The desires of man's heart are evil continually. And yet, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). His righteousness became our righteousness (Philippians 3:9).

As a result of this understanding, our view of God is elevated. Man is not worthy of His grace nor capable of achieving his own salvation. Without the unimaginable grace of God, man is destitute and lost. By His grace, God accomplished salvation and uses His children to spread that message.

Thus, we are not surprised by sin. In fact, the utter and total depravity of man is accentuated by God's absolute holiness. We can expect unrepentant sin in those who have not been affected by His grace. However, as believers in the process of sanctification, we will still experience occasional sin, yet in hopeful expectation of confession and repentance given by the Lord (2 Timothy 2:25). Our high view of God demands that we deal with sin in the midst of His Church, to purify the body and uphold our God as holy.

Scriptures: Genesis 3; Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3; Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 3:10-12, 23, 5:8, 6:23, 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:5, 12-13; Philippians 3:9; 2 Timothy 2:24-26, 4:2-4

4. A biblical view of the Church

The Church of the living God is a living organism comprised of those who have been foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified by God the Father (Romans 8:29-30) through faith alone in the Son of God (Ephesians 2:8) who gave Himself for the payment of sin to satisfy the wrath of the Holy God (Romans 3:25) and to provide His righteousness for those who believe (Romans 3:22). The Church is not spiritual Israel, nor has the Church replaced national Israel in God's ordained plan.

As a portion of the universal Church, Northside is governed by its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His directives as found in the inspired Scriptures. We will not function as a passive organization, but an active, living organism. We will not seek to build the church, as that is the express purpose and distinct domain of Christ Himself (Matthew 16:18). The Lord Himself will build His Church as the saints are faithful in obedience to Him. It is indeed of His good pleasure to invite, exhort, and privilege all men to participate in this ongoing process. Any "purpose" that goes beyond the boundaries of bringing glory to the Savior is inappropriate for His Church.¹

As those who have been called out of the world, adopted into His family, and having become citizens of heaven, we will live in the world but not of the world (John 15:20). We will walk worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1). We will engage in the Great Commission biblically, rejecting the notion that we must temper the message of the cross or "meet the world where they are." The programs of postmodernism

¹ Thus, "seeker sensitive" principles fall into the desires of an organization, but not His body. "Seeker-sensitive" (also termed "market-driven," or "fad-driven") is a modern movement among churches that seeks to make unchurched people comfortable in a church setting by altering (or in some cases removing) the church structure (occasionally including the building), services, programs, and activities in order to hopefully reach those unchurched people. In other words, it is a desire to remove the offense of the cross in order to make people comfortable *or* an inappropriate focusing on the unchurched rather than the God of glory.

(presented in the faith arena as the “emerging” movement), while noble, fail in these areas;² it is a failure to uphold God and His Word and the purpose for the Church. Rather, we will be a church built upon a firm foundation, growing together into a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:20).

Our purpose is to bring glory to God, to uphold Him in the beauty of holiness, and to demonstrate His grace to the world. Our goal is “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5).

Scriptures: Matthew 16:18, 28:18-20; John 15:20; Acts 1:8, 2:42, 4:31, 6:4; 1 Corinthians 1:11, 17, 23-25; Ephesians 2:19-22, 4:1, 11-16; 1 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Revelation 1:12-20

5. A biblical view of church leadership

While there are many examples of leadership in the modern church, Northside seeks to be obedient to the pattern of leadership as laid out in the Scriptures. That means our doctrine *and* practice must be framed first by the Bible and not by tradition or pragmatic decision. With that as our standard, we will follow a leadership structure consisting of elders and deacons. As we are part of His Church, the Lord Jesus is to have absolute rule over Northside. This is demonstrated through biblical, *servant* leadership of those elders with support from the deacons, leaning wholly upon Christ and His Word, deviating neither to the right nor to the left. In the same manner that the Lord Jesus came not to be served, but *to* serve (Matthew 20:28), the leadership of Northside must always lead with a servant’s heart. It should not be assumed that servant leadership negates the pattern of discipline, rebuke, or correction as described in the Scriptures. Rather, should any type of spiritual discipline be necessary, the pattern presented in Scripture (Matthew 18:15-20; 2 Timothy 2:24-26, 4:1-5, etc.) will be followed, for the glory of the Lord, the purity of His bride (the Church), and the repentance, reconciliation, and growth of His people.

In this manner the servant-leadership of Northside will not become dictatorial (as in lording it over the Body), but rather workers together for a common joy (2 Corinthians 1:24). This will also tend to negate the desire of the flesh to separate from the Head, the Lord Jesus, and work independently of Him and His glory. In His physical absence, the Lord has given these leaders to demonstrate servant-hood to the Body, as well as to preach, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and teach. Acts 20:28-31, Hebrews 13:17, and 1 Peter 5:1-5 demonstrate that the elders and deacons answer to the Lord (not the congregation) for their leadership of the local Body—an incredibly humbling thought. It is therefore imperative that the board of Northside present to the congregation biblically qualified individuals for these positions, and that the body exercise Spirit-led discernment in the recognition of those persons for appointment as elders and deacons.

It is in this way that the Body can fulfill its greatest purpose for the glory of the Lord.

Scriptures: Matthew 18:15-20; 20:28; Acts 6:1-4, 20:28-35; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-5

² Postmodernism/emergent/emerging is difficult to define. Basically, it is a movement focused on culture (this is the seeker-sensitive movement taken to its inevitable extreme) and a drifting away from absolutes—even God’s Word as the absolute truth. The intent is positive—to refine the Church and reach the unchurched. Unfortunately, they do so improperly and unbiblically.

STATEMENT OF FAITH OF NORTHSIDE CALVARY CHURCH

Adopted as part of the Constitution, November 24, 1965

Revised as part of the Constitution, July 29, 2007

The Scriptural doctrines to which we ask the assent of all applicants for membership, and all workers associated with the church, are as follows:

- I. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired of God, infallible in the original writings, and are the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21)
- II. We believe that there is one God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself to us in three co-equal Persons: FATHER, SON, & HOLY SPIRIT. (Matt. 28:19-20, 3:17)
- III. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God the Son, became man, begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and possessing a sinless nature and life. Through eternity He continues to be true God and true man, entirely infallible. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a substitutionary and atoning sacrifice. He was resurrected in His crucified body, ascended into heaven, and lives there as our High Priest and Advocate before the Father. (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; I Cor. 15; Hebrews 4:15-16; John 14:30; I Peter 2:21-25)
- IV. We believe that man was created in the image of God. He sinned and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature and are consequently sinners in thought, word and deed. (Rom. 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-3)
- V. We believe that all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and who receive him by faith are saved on the ground of His death and bodily resurrection, and are born of the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming children of God. Those who are born of the Spirit are to live the Christian life solely by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit according to the inspired Word of God. (John 3:5; Titus 3:5; Gal 2:20)
- VI. We believe that the true living Church is composed of all regenerated believers, and its supreme mission is to fulfill Christ's Great Commission in preaching the Gospel to all people. The mission is fulfilled through local bodies of believers, working together for this purpose. (John 15:19; Ephesians 3:1-19; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42)
- VII. We believe that the Memorial of the Lord's Supper and Baptism of believers by immersion is Scriptural, and they shall be the recognized ordinances of this Church. (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:35-38; Col. 2:12; I Cor. 11:23-26)
- VIII. We believe that the personal, bodily, visible, glorious, pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus to this earth is the blessed hope of the believer, and in it God's purposes of grace toward mankind will find their consummation. (Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:16-17)
- IX. We believe that the bodies of the dead, both of the just and unjust, will be resurrected; the saved to enjoy everlasting blessedness and happiness, and the lost to endure everlasting conscious punishment. (I Cor. 15:52-58; Matt. 25:44-46)
- X. We believe in the personality of Satan, who walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, or who may appear as an angel of light. (I Peter 5:8; II Cor. 11:14; Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 20:10). We also believe and stand for all other Bible truths. (II Tim. 3:16-17)