



## Values and Core Beliefs

Agreed 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004

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### Core Values

#### Upwards

##### Worship

We recognise that the chief end of the human race is to glorify God and fully enjoy him forever. We realise that worship is a key part of this and is a way of life as we give ourselves as living sacrifices. Yet we know that time given in praise and intimacy with God is time when we are being transformed more into His likeness. We aim to give priority to public and private worship, recognising that where two or three are gathered God is in our midst. We also recognise the need for integrity and flexibility as we worship God in Spirit and in truth.

##### The Word

We recognise the authority of the Bible as the Word of God and seek to read it, meditate on it, and be transformed according to its teachings through the power of God's Spirit. We recognize the centrality of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God. We seek to share this message publicly and, as the opportunities arise, through our network of personal relationships. We recognize that God speaks to our hearts and minds as we encounter His words in the Bible. The Bible is able to both inform and enlighten our understanding of the nature of God and His purposes for His world. It is able to speak into every area of life. We seek to teach the principles discovered in the Word of God which will 'equip the saints for the work of ministry'. We recognise the relevance of God's Word in all situations and seek to draw out its relevance wherever possible through appropriate forms of language which speak into whatever culture we encounter.

##### Prayer

We recognize that Jesus set aside time to pray and taught his disciples to pray and cleansed the temple so that it could be a place of prayer for all nations. Prayer is both our intimacy with the Father and our intercession for the world. Through prayer we align our will with that of the Father recognising that we might be part of God's answer to our prayer. We want to join in prayer as a church, as individuals, and with fellow believers. We want our individual lives, our homes and our church to be places where prayer is natural.

## **Inwards**

### **Community**

God is committed to relationship. We believe that Jesus Christ will return for His church, which has 'made herself ready' (Rev 19:7). We seek to be prepared by creating a community that is transformed by His love. We seek to love, serve, forgive and learn from one another, and live transparent lives. We want to be an extended family of God, committed to unity, loyalty and trust. We seek to be accountable to one another and to those in leadership; encouraging each other and being ready to be led on further to live sacrificial lives in conformity to the word of God. Christ welcomes all and we seek to reflect His openness in His church, working it out in forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. We affirm that all Christians are called to reflect God's standards of morality in every sphere of life as they grow to full maturity in Christ.

### **Ministry**

The church is a body where every member has a part to play. We are called to minister to one another through acts of service and also through spiritual gifts which God pours out on His church. Whenever we meet we expect to see God at work among us, and the kingdom of God advanced. We recognise that through this ministry the image of God is renewed within us and we become the people we were created to be. We encourage every member to be involved in ministry both within and outside the church.

### **Discipleship**

We recognize that God calls us to be disciples ourselves and to make disciples. This is a lifelong process of learning and growing towards maturity. Maturity can come through teaching and training, exercising faith, suffering, repentance, obedience and consistent service. Evidence of growth includes the fruit of the Spirit being exhibited in our lives as we become more like Jesus. Every individual is uniquely created and loved by God and is uniquely gifted and valued. We value the diversity that enriches our lives and recognise that God desires unity not uniformity.

## **Outwards**

### **Unity**

Christ prayed that we may be 'one so that the world might believe'. We recognise and acknowledge that we belong to Christ's universal church as revealed in the scriptures and expressed throughout the history and tradition of the church. We are part of this worldwide family of God expressed through fellowship, baptism and the breaking of bread. We know that our unity will persuade, convince and convict people of the divinity of Christ. We therefore seek within the church to keep the unity in the bond of peace. We recognize and value the work of Christians of other traditions who seek to build up the kingdom of God and will seek to work in partnership with them. Whilst recognizing Christ as the way, the truth and the life and the only way to the Father, we will also work with those of other faith traditions in seeking the good of our communities without denying or compromising our beliefs.

### **Service**

The bible repeatedly calls us to seek justice and to serve the poor. We seek to have open hearts and hands to the poor wherever we find them. We look for God-given projects, which can give a face to this so that we can be an influence for good, making a difference in the communities where we live, in our town as a whole, and to the ends of the earth. We will seek ways of being salt, yeast and light. Above all we pray that we might see the world as Christ sees it so that our hearts might not be hardened, but may overflow in acts of compassion to the poor in body, mind and spirit.

### **Mission**

We believe that our calling is, with others, to advance the kingdom of God in our town, our region, our nation and to the ends of the earth. Central to this is proclaiming the gospel, calling people to repentance and faith in Christ alone. We believe that we are all called to be witnesses . We are aware of the extraordinary opportunity and responsibility represented by the diversity of community in our town and will seek to share Christ with all. We will seek to scatter the seeds of faith, look to God to grow the plant, and be ready to harvest at every opportunity. We also recognise that Bolton is a town which has seen spiritual awakening as well as martyrdom in the past, and we long to see a fresh move of God through the whole town.

# Core Beliefs

As a NETWORK CHURCH we are committed to the core beliefs as set out below

## The Bolton Network Church Basis of Faith

We believe in...

1. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons-the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
3. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God-fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
4. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
5. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ-born of the virgin Mary, truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
6. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
7. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the firstfruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
8. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
9. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
10. The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers-given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
11. The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.