

DEFINING DOCUMENTS

Century Meadows Baptist Church

These articles define our theology, purpose, mission, and values.

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ARTICLE 1 — STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

- D1.1 We believe that the Bible is God’s Word given by divine inspiration and the record of God’s revelation of Himself to humanity** (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error — the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (I Peter 1:23-25; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17.) It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (John 20:31, I John 5:9-12; Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2).
- D1.2 We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love** (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 86:15; Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He exists eternally in three coequal persons who act together in creation, providence and redemption (Genesis 1:26; I Peter 1:2; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- D1.2.1** The Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe. He hears and answers prayer (I Chronicles 29:11-13; Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior (I John 4:9-10; John 3:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31).
- D1.2.2** The Son became a man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18). Being fully God and fully man, He revealed God through His sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules over all creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever-present Lord (Romans 8:34; John 14:23).
- D1.2.3** The Holy Spirit inspired people to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, He convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Savior, and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18; John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5-6; Romans 8:16). At regeneration and conversion, the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 12:5-8; I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christ-likeness in all who yield to Him (Acts 4:31; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:16; 22-23).
- D1.3 We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and do His will** (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). The holy angels are obedient spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7; 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice revolted and fell from their exalted position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1; I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ’s victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).
- D1.4 We believe God created human beings in His own image to have fellowship with Himself**

and to be stewards over His creation (Genesis 1:26-28). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 8-22). Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9-18, 23). Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him (Ephesians 4:27; II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 16:23). Nonetheless, everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12; I Timothy 2:5).

D1.4.1 We believe the Bible teaches that marriage refers to the covenant relationship exclusively between one man and one woman, as instituted by God in the beginning (Genesis 2:20b-24; I Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4). *(Added by the North American Baptist Conference delegates, July 15-19, 2009, at Winnipeg, Manitoba.)*

D1.5 We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 20:21). An individual is united to Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). As a child of God, the believer is acquitted of all guilt and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 3:12).

D1.6 We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:41-42, 47; Luke 24:45-48). Each church is a self-governing body under the lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28). The form of government is understood to be congregational (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:3-6; 15:22-23).

The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

To express unity in Christ, local churches form associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship and a more effective fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 15; I Corinthians 6:1-3).

D1.7 We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all Individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27; John 8:32; II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21; Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other (Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders, and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.

D1.8 We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christ-like spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 9:23; Titus 2:12; Philippians 4:8-9; I John 3:16-17; James 2:1-4).

We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 6:1-4).

D1.9 We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10, Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7; 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25-41, 46; Revelation 20:10). The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

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ARTICLE 2– STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our purpose as a local Church is to glorify Christ by obeying His Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

In keeping with that purpose, we shall:

D2.1 Seek to know the Triune God and meet regularly for corporate worship of Him.

D2.2 Teach and exemplify the Biblical ingredients of a disciple of Jesus.

D2.3 Incorporate people, according to their giftedness, to teaching, encouraging, exhorting, praying, giving, helping, and using every means given to us by His Holy Spirit to minister to the body of Christ and to our community.

ARTICLE 3 – STATEMENT OF MISSION

D3.1 Celebration: Worship that Magnifies God

We believe that our first priority to God as expressed in the Great Commandment is to love God with all of one's heart, soul, and mind. As the greatest expression of our love for God, we are committed to a private and public worship of God, "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). We shall grow in our expression of worship by giving true honor to the Living Word (Jesus Christ) and the Written Word (the Scriptures). We shall endeavor to have a balanced, biblical worship that recognizes both traditional and contemporary forms.

D3.2 Ministry: Service that Ministers Grace

We believe that love for God cannot be separated from love for people. The second part of the Great Commandment is to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

We are committed to a ministry that is characterized by the grace of God. We recognize that grace is received in an individual’s appropriation of the saving work of Christ followed by baptism as a believer. We will endeavor to encourage people to minister this grace by being servants and thus extending God’s grace to others in a Christ-like spirit.

D3.3 Biblical Evangelism: Evangelism that Multiplies Disciples

We believe that one of the central purposes of the Church is expressed in Jesus’ last words on earth - the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The Church is to “go and make disciples” or evangelize those who are without a personal understanding of God’s salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

We are committed to faithfulness to the Scriptures in presenting the gospel - that salvation is God’s work, not a human work, accomplishing it through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. We shall endeavor to see every Christian be involved in evangelism.

We believe that biblical evangelism is more than making “decisions.” The church, with God’s enabling, is to make disciples - those who follow Christ fully.

D3.4 Community: Fellowship that Models Love

We believe, in accordance with the Great Commission, those who are evangelized, those who have received salvation in Christ, express that reality through baptism by immersion. This ordinance symbolizes one’s introductory commitment to the fellowship and community of the local church.

We are committed to the truth that the local church is to be a community of relationships built upon Jesus Christ the Head, and His Word. We endeavor to see the church as a place where relationships are nurtured, gifts are expressed, and the individual ministers to the church, and the church ministers to the individual (II Timothy 3:16-4:2).

D3.5 Character: Teaching that Matures Disciples

We believe that the goal of reaching people for Christ is to teach them to “obey everything I (Christ) have commanded you.” We are committed to faithfully teaching the Scriptures fully (all aspects of God’s revealed truth) and balanced (giving all truth its rightful place).

Our endeavor in teaching the Scriptures is to see “life-change,” with an ever-growing obedience to Jesus Christ in all things.

ARTICLE 4 – STATEMENT OF VALUES

D4.1 Worship

D4.1.1 We believe that personal and corporate worship is essential to the health of every believer (John 4:23, 24).

D4.1.2 We believe that God is magnified, honored, glorified when we worship and serve Him with our best (Romans 12:1, 2).

D4.2 Service

D4.2.1 We believe that service to God and others is the natural outcome of God's grace in a person's heart (Ephesians 2:8-10).

D4.2.2 We believe that the church is to be led by godly, gifted leaders who empower people to minister God's grace with all of the church's resources being governed by biblical principles (Ephesians 4:11-14).

D4.3 Evangelism

D4.3.1 We believe that every believer should be committed to influencing their circle of friends toward Christ (I Peter 3:15).

D4.3.2 We believe the church is called to make disciples of Jesus Christ, culturally relevant, but doctrinally pure (Matthew 28:19, 20).

D4.4 Community

D4.4.1 We believe that the church should be a community of servants who are unified, loving and mutually accountable. (I Peter 3:8, 9).

D4.4.2 We believe that true Christian community, care and life-change occurs most readily in small groups (Acts 2:44-47).

D4.5 Character

D4.5.1 We believe that Bible teaching that is faithful to the Scriptures and practically applied to life is a prime catalyst for change in people's lives (I Timothy 3:15-17).

D4.5.2 We believe that every believer should be fully devoted to Christ (I Corinthians 10:31).

ARTICLE 5 – STATEMENT OF COVENANT OF COMMITMENT**D5.1 Our Covenant of Life Together**

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord; and on the confession of this faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most sincerely and joyfully covenant with one another, as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him (Romans 12:3-8; Colossians 3:12-14).

D5.2 Our Covenant to Participate in the Ordinances

Recognizing that Christ gave the Church two ordinances to be observed until He comes, we practice them in faith and obedience. We recognize the necessity to be baptized following faith in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 28:18-20). Then, as an ongoing practice, we recognize the importance of participating regularly in the ordinance of communion (I Corinthians 11:23-32).

D5.3 Our Covenant for the Advancement of the Church

We promise, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to forsake the ways of sin and to walk together in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness. With this in view, we will, with God's help, work together for both the peace and purity of this church, to sustain its worship and steadfastly to cherish and uphold its ordinances, disciplines and doctrines (Philippians 2:14-16).

D5.4 Our Covenant as Christian Stewards

We shall, with God's help, contribute as faithful stewards, time, abilities, and finances in the measure that God has given to each of us, so that the responsibility for the work of the local church and the world-wide ministry of spreading the gospel may be faithfully and effectively discharged (I Peter 4:10).

D5.5 Our Covenant While Alone and At Home

We shall undertake, with our Lord's help, to maintain family and private devotions, to teach the Bible to our children and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances (Ephesians 6:4).

D5.6 Our Covenant Before the World

We shall, with the help of God, be just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements, be exemplary in our deportment, avoiding unkind words and unrighteous anger, remembering always and in everything that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We shall, with God's help, combine zeal and knowledge in our efforts to advance the cause of our Savior and make Christ first in all things both spiritual and temporal (I Peter 3:15-16; Colossians 4:6).

D5.7 Our Covenant Toward One Another

We shall, by the grace of God and with His help, give and receive admonition with meekness and affection, remembering each other in prayer, aiding each other in case of sickness and distress, cultivating Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech, being slow to take offence but being always ready for reconciliation and encouraging one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return (Hebrews 10:24).

D5.8 Our Covenant If We Move

If we move from this place, we shall endeavor, as soon as possible to unite with a local church where we are encouraged to carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God (Hebrews 10:25).

ARTICLE 6— STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

D6.1 In accordance to the NAB Statement of Beliefs (section 1.4), we affirm that each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect.

D6.2 We also affirm that we are called to introduce each person to the loving, reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ and the life changing transformation described in Scripture.

D6.3 We believe that the Bible clearly teaches that marriage is the spiritual and legal union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. To recognize any other form of union, as a legitimate marriage, or, as a legitimate form of sexual expression, would be contrary to our understanding of the Scripture. It would also be contrary to the stated positions of the ABA and NABC, of which the church is affiliated.

D6.4 Though as Christians we seek to demonstrate God's love to all people, we will not compromise

our convictions on marriage as defined by Scripture.

- D6.5** We, the church, also establish the standard that no individual in any way associated with the church shall officiate at or co-officiate at a ceremony to celebrate any union not conforming to the previously stated definition of marriage.
- D6.6** The facilities of the church will not be used for weddings, blessings, celebrations, receptions or any other gathering where the union does not conform to the previously stated definition of marriage.
- D6.7** The above definition of marriage will extend to include retreats, camps, seminars or any other activities of the church.