

# DOWNTOWN CHURCH DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

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At Downtown Church, we share certain **Core Values** that define the direction of our ministry:

- **Authenticity** We strive to be honest and genuine while encouraging people to be authentic with God and one another.
- **Fellowship** We seek to “do life together” – laughing, crying, forgiving, working, and playing – being involved with each other with God as our common bond.
- **Diversity** We welcome all people to worship and grow with us knowing that diversity will enrich our lives through Christ who crossed all racial and cultural lines.
- **Spirituality** We practice spiritual disciplines, such as the study of God’s word, worship, prayer, fasting, feasting, fellowship, and service, in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Compassionate Action** We feel a special calling to care for the poor and less fortunate in a compassionate way on the local, national, and international level, so that the world may know the compassion of God.
- **Teaching God’s Word** We believe that God speaks to the church primarily through His Word, and for that reason we are devoted to its teaching.
- **Prayer** We desire the relationship that arises from communicating with God through prayer. We believe in the power of prayer.

### **DBC Essential Doctrine Shorter Form**

We believe that:

- The scriptures are the very Word of God.
- There is one God in three persons, who is the creator of all things.
- Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity, died for sinful mankind and rose from the dead three days later guaranteeing salvation for all who believe in Him.
- The Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, is active and powerful in the lives of believers and He permanently resides within every believer.
- Mankind was created in the image of God, became eternally separated because of sin, and required the grace and mercy of God to bring the opportunity for salvation to all men.
- Salvation is received by faith alone, believing in the death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

### **THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which are to be observed by believers until He returns (Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

We believe by water baptism a believer is publicly identified with his Savior and that infants of believing parents may be dedicated to the Lord but should not be baptized until they can personally articulate their faith and the purpose of baptism.

We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death, the elements being symbols of His body and blood. We believe every Christian has a right to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper but that participation must always be preceded by solemn self-examination.

## **FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES**

We believe that these foundational doctrines are the essentials of true Christianity and that there is no room for divergence from these essentials. These are the doctrines that all of our leadership and members hold to.

### **The Scriptures**

The Scriptures are the Word of God. Every word in the original writings was inspired by God and is, therefore without error. The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of the Scriptures and used their unique personalities to compose and record God's revelation to man. The Scriptures are accurate in all matters to which they speak, spiritual, historical, and scientific. The Bible was designed for man's practical instruction and relates God's pursuit for the heart of mankind. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

### **God**

There is one God, the Creator and Preserver of all things. God exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three have distinct personalities and yet are of the same substance. They have the same nature and attributes, they are equal in power and glory, and they are worthy of the same homage, confidence and obedience. (Gen. 1:1; John 4:24; Deut. 6:4, Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

### **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity and is the eternal Son of God and has been coequal with the Father from all eternity. He is God in the same sense and the same degree as the Father. He is fully man and fully God. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus Christ was born without a sinful nature and though he was truly tempted, he committed no sin. Due to this sinless life, he could offer himself as an unblemished sacrifice to God on behalf of sinful mankind. He died physically on the cross, was bodily resurrected three days later, and thereafter bodily ascended to heaven. One day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. (John 1:1, 14, 18; John 5:18; Heb. 1:2-3; 1 John 5:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 15:1-5; Phil. 2:9-11)

### **Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and has been coequal with the Father from all eternity. He is active in the lives of believers and he permanently resides within every believer. The Holy Spirit guides, inspires, illuminates, and continues the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. He regenerates, indwells, baptizes, and seals all believers in Christ at the point of faith. He is one with the Father and the Son. His baptism unites all to Christ in one body and He is the source of all power. (Matt. 28:19; John 3:3-7, Acts 2:1-4; Titus 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:19, Rom. 8:9; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:30)

### **Salvation**

Salvation is received by faith alone in Christ. The only means to salvation is belief in Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection, which satisfied the wrath of God against the sins of the individual. Man's sin is a violation of the will of God and it results in separation from God. Due to this universal death of man through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God. A restoration of the broken relationship between God and man is necessary. However, no degree of personal reformation, no life of morality or no life of good works can help a person take one step toward heaven. Man's redemption has been accomplished solely by the sacrifice and the blood of Jesus Christ, who died as a substitute for man. His sacrifice is sufficient for salvation; man can do nothing to add to the value of this sacrifice. The new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Christ. Repentance is a vital part of believing, but it is in no way a separate condition of salvation. There is an eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and an eternal state of blessing for the saved. (Acts 4:12; Acts 13:38-39; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 4:4-5; Rom. 5:1; John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 16:31; Eph 1:4-5; Rom. 8:29-30)

### **Man**

Man was created in the image and likeness of God to enjoy God's fellowship and to fulfill God's will on earth. Adam, at the suggestion of Satan, fell from his sinless state through his disobedience. The consequence for his sin was the loss of spiritual life. This fall plunged all men into a state of sin and spiritual death. As a result of

sin, all men are spiritually dead; justly condemned to eternal judgment and can do nothing to merit salvation. All men are born with a sinful nature and lead a sinful life in thought, word and deed. From this condition, man can only be saved by the grace of God. (Gen. 1:27, Rom. 2:3, 5; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1; Eph. 2:8-9)

## **STRUCTURAL DOCTRINES**

We consider our "structural doctrines" to be extremely important. They help to define who we are as a church. However, we also acknowledge that there is some room for disagreement among committed believers over these important issues. These structural doctrines are an important part of our beliefs, but are not a requirement to membership in our church.

### **Sanctification**

Sanctification is the continuing work of God in the life of the believer. Every believer is promised positional, progressive, and ultimate sanctification. Positional sanctification, based on the death of Christ, occurs at conversion when the believer is set apart in the family of God. Through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit, the believer undergoes a progressive transformation of character. Ultimate sanctification will only occur when the believer sees Christ and becomes like Him. (Heb. 10:10, 14; John 17:15-17; Phil. 1:6; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 6:11)

### **Assurance**

Every person who is born of the Spirit through faith in Christ has the assurance, or confidence, of salvation and is eternally secure in Christ. This assurance of eternal security is not based on the work or the worth of the individual, but is based entirely on the testimony and promise of God in the Scriptures. God will never reject those who are his own, because of His character, promises, grace and power. (Luke 10:20; Rom. 5:1; John 6:37; John 10:27-29; John 17:12; 2 Tim. 1:12; Eph. 4:30; 1 John 5:13)

### **Church**

The church is composed of all believers. It is the body and bride of Christ, formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and existing in two aspects, universal and local. The universal church is an elect company of believers, baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. Its mission is to witness to its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all nations. It will be caught up to meet the Lord, after which He will return to set up His Kingdom. The local church is a group of believers voluntarily joined together in love to worship God with praise and thanksgiving, and to glorify Jesus Christ through an aggressive effort to disciple others by the preaching of the Gospel, and the exercise of spiritual gifts. (Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:24-30; 1 Cor. 12:4-13, 27)

### **Gifts**

Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities for service, i.e., "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ." The Holy Spirit bestows certain special gifts upon believers within the body of Christ. In Paul's writings there are three different lists of the gifts; a fourth list is included in 1 Peter. (Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:4, 11; Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:8-11)

### **Christian Life**

Christians are called to a holy life of service and testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit, which service includes the propagation of the gospel message to the whole world. There is promised reward in heaven for faithfulness in such service. (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:12-17; John 14:1-3)

### **Ordinances**

Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances that Christ gave to His church to be publicly observed after His death and Resurrection. Baptism is a one-time act of obedience and is an outward testimony of a person's belief in Christ. Baptism is a symbol of unity among believers and signifies a spiritual identification with Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection. Only those persons who profess a personal faith in Jesus Christ may be baptized. Immersion is the ideal means set forth in Scripture. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated

regularly as a memorial in remembrance of Christ's death on the cross, and in expectation of His return. The elements of the Lord's Supper represent the body and blood of Christ and are available to all believers who have confessed their sins to God. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

### **Angels and Demons**

Angels (their name means "messengers") were originally created holy by God and are superior to humans in power and intelligence. Before the creation of the world, a prideful Satan led a rebellion against God. Because of Satan's rebellion, there is also an unholy demonic, angelic kingdom. However, these demons were defeated at the Cross and even though they oppose God and His people, they will face the final judgment. (Col. 1:16; Job 38:6-7; Ps. 148:2-5; Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Pet. 2:11; Jude 6; Rev. 12:9)

### **Second Coming**

The blessed hope of the church is the imminent return of Christ. The events of the return of Christ take place in the following order: the rapture of the church, the tribulation, the second advent, the establishment of the reign of Christ on earth for 1,000 years, and finally the eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and the eternal state of blessing for the saved. (Titus 2:13; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:4-10; John 14:1-3; Matt. 24:21, 29-30; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 3:10; 20:1-6, 11-15)