



Statement of Faith

Within the life of any local church there have always been and will always be a need for clarity on a number of topics, beliefs, and practices. While each belief and practice is important and requires clarity in some form, the most foundational piece is the way in which a church discerns the level of clarity to provide and the prioritization given to each topic, belief, or practice.

There have always been beliefs that have created distinctions within historic Christianity. However, not every belief and every doctrine is meant to be held with the same level of conviction or should be used equally to draw lines of division within the Church. Jesus' prayer for us as his people is that we would be united as he and the Father are united. The hope of this document is to bring clarity to the ways in which the elders of Impact Church seek to shepherd our church toward Jesus through a means of discipleship that emphasizes Core Beliefs, provides humble discernment on Distinctive Beliefs, and is generous with Open Handed Beliefs.

Core Beliefs

Core Beliefs are doctrines and beliefs central to Christianity. These doctrines and beliefs are either vital to understand the Gospel, would hinder placing saving faith in the work and person of Jesus, or that by rejecting them would reveal a life, heart, and mind not surrendered to Jesus' teachings.

Distinctive Beliefs

Distinctive Beliefs are doctrines and beliefs that are non-essential to Christianity. However, non-essential is not the same as unimportant. Their importance is rooted in their ability to clarify the level of partnership and cooperation possible between local churches and organizations. These beliefs also have an impact in the life and practice of any given local church. For Distinctive Beliefs, it should be recognized these are beliefs that have historically led to debate and discussion within the church, with opposing sides prayerfully weighing the full counsel of Scripture, desiring to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and leading to hold differing viewpoints. With this in mind, it is vital that in the area of Distinctive Beliefs we study the evidence of both sides with a humble hermeneutic (interpretive approach to the Scriptures) and seek to love and respect those who hold a differing position.

Open-Hand Beliefs

Open Handed Beliefs are doctrines and beliefs that can be researched in the Scriptures and through other resources but are meant to be held more as studied opinions than firm beliefs. They are beliefs of charity within historic Christianity and are known for typically having the least amount of biblical clarity and holding little effect on personal and church life. Impact's elders will rarely express an official position on this category. Instead, they will encourage the church to learn from and be disciplined on these topics from a variety of perspectives while at the same time focusing the majority of their attention on the first two categories as to not get distracted with Open Handed Beliefs.

Core Beliefs

God

We believe God is the creator and sustainer of everything. We believe he exist in community, called the Holy Trinity. We believe he is all powerful, but also very personal.

People

We believe people are made in God's image and are his masterpiece. We believe because of sin, people aren't perfect. We believe every person is loved dearly by God.

Sin

We believe sin has the potential to destroy everything in our lives. We believe sin separates us from God. We believe Jesus took the punishment for our sin on the cross. We believe we also fight sin here on earth, but with the help of the Holy Spirit we can deny sin, and choose life instead.

Eternity

We believe eternity is something we can experience here on earth if we choose to follow Jesus. We believe everyone will spend eternity in heaven or hell.

Jesus

We believe Jesus is the Son of God & the only way to salvation. We believe because of his death & resurrection we can know God, spend eternity with him, and experience his presence in our life every day.

The Holy Spirit

We believe The HS is how God moves in our world today. We believe The HS lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation.

The Church

We believe the Church is what Jesus uses to reach the world. We believe the church is a group of non-perfect people, that are the body of Christ, his Ambassadors, and represent him in all we do.

Bible

We believe the Bible to be the authority of our church. This is because the Bible is God's word. We believe the Bible is true throughout and is the primary way God speaks to us.

Distinctive Beliefs

Baptism

We believe baptism is a outward declaration of inward decision to follow Jesus. We believe baptism does not equal salvation, but represents it. We believe however, should be the Christian's first step after receiving Jesus. We believe that multiple baptisms are not necessary due to changing churches, rededication to the Lord, etc. We believe baptism is appropriate for believer's who are old enough to understand the decision. The only qualification for baptism at Impact is to have an initial conversation with our senior pastor after signing up. This is to confirm the reasoning for the decision is an appropriate response by the individual.

Communion

We practice "open table" with communion. We suggest that only Christians partake but do not withhold from anyone. Individuals may chose to not participate during communion if they feel like they shouldn't.

Marriage

We believe marriage is a holy covenant between a man and woman, and also God. We believe marriage is a lifetime commitment, for two people to become one flesh, both submitted to loving and serving each other, as both love and serve Jesus.

Child Dedication

We believe there is something significant about churches and parents making a declaration before the Lord. Child dedication is a public declaration and commitment by the parents and church to help the child in every way possible to know Jesus and find community in the local church.

Men & Women in Ministry

We believe that the church is called to empower men and women to flourish in their full diversity given by the Spirit of God for the building up of the church body. This includes empowering men and women to lead as pastors, elders, deacons, and volunteers. Men and women, through God's Spirit, make decisions, teach, exhort, encourage, serve, demonstrate hospitality, evangelize, and disciple, etc. We believe there is a vital need for both men and women to complement one another in ministry environments as well as in all aspects of life.

Open-Handed Beliefs

Church Methodology - How we're suppose to do "church services"

The New Testament does not give us a formal model (how to) for operating a church. It gives us mission, doctrine, principles, and examples which we do our best to follow. We love and accept any style of church that leads people to a life giving relationship with Jesus. We may lovingly agree to disagree on what the best methods are, but we will not divide over church methodology.

Charismatic Theology. - Does God still do that?

There are some who believe that the power of God, including the gifts of the spirit, healing, and miraculous signs and wonders passed away with the original Apostles. There are other who believe that God continues to do the miraculous through Christ's church. These debated issues include but aren't limited to: Healing, Miracles, Signs and Wonders, Prophecy, Tongues & Interpretation as well as the other spiritual gifts Visions, Dreams & Angelic visitation. While we will not enforce any formal belief in the supernatural we simply ask that people do not limit God or discourage others who do believe in the supernatural. If a person does not believe that God works in this way we can lovingly agree to disagree, but we will not divide over any type of Charismatic Theology.

Practical Theology - How does God work in the world?

There are many theological positions that have evidence on both sides. Although it's appropriate to hold a position, these issues have the potential to divide the church. It's best to have an "open hand" or open mind with these issues and not profess to have the "answer" to these debates. Some examples are: Calvinism vs Arminianism, Eschatology (study of the end times including - death, judgement, heaven, and hell), Science and the Bible (Gap theory, creation / evolution combinations), etc.

Christian Lifestyle - How should Christians live?

Lifestyle choices can easily become one of the greatest points of division in a church because it is external – it can be seen and measured by others. There is great difficulty involved in defining "rules and regulations" for the church, so we deal with sin on a case by case basis, determined by the appropriate level of needed accountability.

Agreement on Beliefs & Accountability

At no level of being a part of Impact Church is there a required agreement to any stated Open Handed Belief.

Attending Impact - We have no exceptions for “Christ-like” living from anyone who attend services or events. We exist to give everyone a chance to connect with God and people regardless of where they’re at in their spiritual journey

Volunteers/Serve Team Members - Volunteers do not need to necessarily hold any of our church’s beliefs as their personal beliefs. However, it is important that they are aware of them, and don’t attempt to teach others anything other than our church’s core beliefs for the sake of clarity and unity. Volunteers are expected to represent Jesus in how they live and serve at Impact, regardless of where they are in their spiritual journey. Depending on the role, sinful behavior may be personally confronted by a serve team leader, ministry leader or a pastor. The individual may be asked to step down for an amount of time or permanently from their position depending on the issue at hand, the receptivity to correction, and the restoration process that’s necessary. Restoration process is often private.

Serve Team Leaders/Connect Group Leaders /Next-Gen - Group & Next-Gen Leaders are expected to be Christ followers, in pursuit of Christlikeness that results in a growing relationship with God producing the fruit of the Sprit. These leaders must be able to personally affirm that they hold the Core Beliefs and Distinctive Beliefs as personal beliefs. Sinful behavior or false teaching may be personally confronted by a pastor or our connect group/next-gen coordinators and the individual may be asked to step down from position depending on the issue at hand, the receptivity to correction, and the restoration process that’s necessary. Restoration process is often private.

Staff & Ministry Leaders- Ministry leaders are expected to be Christ followers, in pursuit of Christlikeness that results in a growing relationship with God producing the fruit of the Sprit. These leaders must be able to personally affirm that they hold the Core Beliefs and Distinctive Beliefs as personal beliefs. Though no leader is expected to be “perfect” these leaders must live in such a way that is beyond reproach and will not offend the conscience of others. This may involve giving up certain activities though they may be “permissible” are just not “beneficial” in helping people find Jesus. Sinful behavior will be personally confronted by the senior pastor and/or the elders and the individual may be asked to step down or fired from the position depending on the issue at hand, the receptivity to correction, and the restoration process that’s necessary. Restoration process will be private as much as possible to protect the individual, family, etc. but may be public depending on the ministry position.

Elders & Senior Pastor - The Elders along with the Senior Pastor are expected to be Christ followers, in pursuit of Christlikeness that results in a growing relationship with God producing the fruit of the Sprit. The lifestyle, family dynamics, finances, and public image of these leaders must all represent Christ and his church. These individuals will be held to a higher standard than others due to their influence and calling. All elders need to must hold agreement on all Core Beliefs and Distinctive Beliefs. Though no leader is expected to be “perfect” these leaders must live in such a way that is beyond reproach and will not offend the conscience of others. This may involve giving up questionable activities though they may be “permissible” are just not “beneficial” in helping people find Jesus. Sinful behavior will be personally confronted by the elder team and the individual may be asked to step down from the position depending on the issue at hand, the receptivity to correction, and the restoration process that’s necessary. Due to the nature of the role the restoration process is often public.