

# STATEMENT OF FAITH AND VALUES

## DOCUMENT 5

### STATEMENT OF FAITH

Our Statement of Faith outlines what we consider to be the primary, non-negotiable, Biblical doctrines that we believe, as partner churches. Churches are free to adopt this Statement of Faith as their own or, even better, to use it as a plumb line against which to develop their own, more detailed Statement of Faith. This is the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Alliance of the UK. For us, it adequately captures the main beliefs that Advance partner churches subscribe to.

We believe in:

- The one true God, who lives eternally in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
- 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.
- 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 judgment.
- The incarnation of God's eternal son, the Lord Jesus Christ, born of the virgin, Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price for sin and defeating evil - and so reconciling us with God.
- The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection, his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only saviour of the world.
- The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God, through faith in Christ.
- 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.
- 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.
- The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgment, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new Earth.

## VALUES

We have five foundational, imperative values that all partner churches eagerly embrace. However, the local application of these values differs from church to church, depending on the conviction of the local elders and their context. While we value many things (see the page that follows), we have chosen these five below as our “Big 5.” This is not only because we believe that these five values are very important, but because *the blend* of these five things might make us somewhat unique.

### **Gospel-Centered**

"Gospel-centered" refers to the Biblical philosophy of ministry that keeps the gospel message at the center of all ministry, whether to believers or unbelievers. Belief in the gospel is the means by which we *enter* God's kingdom; and it is also the means by which we *make all progress* in the kingdom. The good news of the gospel - that we can be saved from the wrath of God - contains both the power and motivation for salvation, and everything within salvation. We desire local churches to help unbelievers and believers increasingly believe and apply the gospel to every area of their lives.

### **Mission-Focused**

We are convinced that God intends churches to be outward-focused mission agencies (both locally and globally); and that he intends all believers to be fishers of men. As such, we desire local churches to specifically equip and inspire their members to win people to Christ. We also desire the church community to be on mission more broadly by way of society-serving initiatives and church planting.

### **Disciple-Making**

Because Jesus himself made disciples and commissioned all believers to make disciples, our goal is for every believer to become a *disciple-making disciple*. We desire local churches to actively make disciple-making disciples who know, love and obey Jesus. Courses and tools might help, but discipleship happens via intentional relationships, as well as via small groups that prioritize this.

### **Spirit-Empowered**

We believe that local churches should be in eager and intelligent pursuit of the presence, power, fruit and gifts of God's Spirit, as mentioned in the Bible. We believe that all believers should heed the Biblical call to be filled with the Spirit, and remain filled, throughout their lives.

### **Elder-Led**

We believe that churches should be led by a called and capable team of elders with a team leader who is “first among equals.” This team of elders should lovingly guard, guide and govern the church. Elders are the highest human authority over a local church. We encourage elders toward connection with translocal ministers in order to help them fulfil their calling. The Biblical expectation is that elders are male.

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Churches that are exploring partnership with Advance often ask about other things that we value dearly. They also ask about the kind of “feel” that we think a New Testament-type church would have in today’s world. To this end, here are another fifteen Biblical values that we warmly encourage, and help, churches to pursue.

1. Enjoying God’s grace and sovereignty
2. Encouraging faith-filled exploits
3. Prioritizing and preaching the Bible
4. Worshipping whole-heartedly
5. Prioritizing prayer
6. Cultivating a family culture
7. Celebrating diversity
8. Nurturing a healthy home-life
9. Excelling in financial generosity
10. Observing believers' baptism and communion
11. Modelling servant-leadership
12. Pursuing societal renewal
13. Loving mercy and doing justice
14. Honoring other churches
15. Meaningful wider partnership