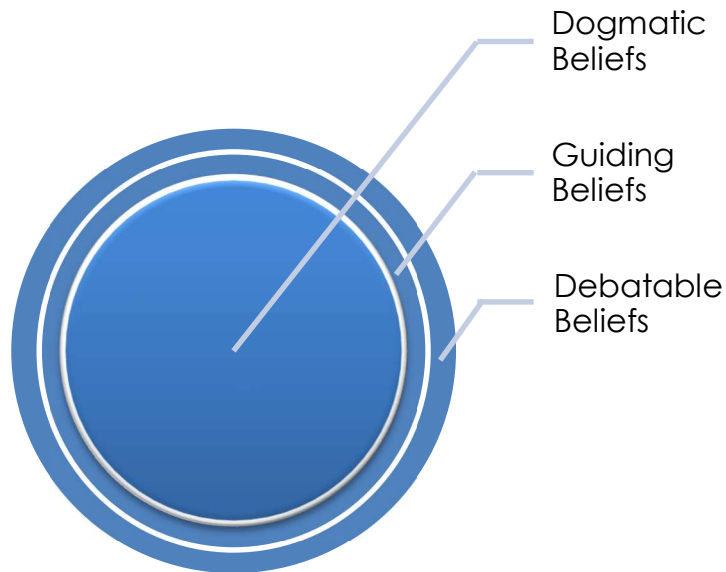


Our Mission

Our mission is to inspire, equip, and empower individuals to be daily apprentices of Jesus, so they live a significant story.

Our “Kingdom” Beliefs



Jesus taught on the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven) more than any other topic. According to his teachings, Jesus wants us to pray for, deeply desire, and dedicate ourselves to seeing the Kingdom as he described it and as it operates in heaven made visible and active in our daily experiences here on earth. (Matthew 6:9-13) The purpose, goal, and result of the Kingdom is life, not church centered metrics and outcomes. Instead, it is about life. Jesus said, “I have come to give you abundant life.” (John 10:10)

Since these topics were core the message of Jesus, our beliefs are centered around his Kingdom and a hierarchical understand of their importance. A helpful framework of understanding that hierarchy is Dogmatic, Guiding, Debatable Beliefs.

Dogmatic Beliefs- A dogma is a principle that a group holds as incontrovertibly true or of critical importance.

Guiding Beliefs - A guiding belief frames the basic foundational principles for an organization to function in harmony together, and to promote and defend the Dogma.

Debatable Beliefs - Debatable topics do not have clear, definitive answers but rely on overall principles of dogmatic and guiding beliefs to determine the best possible direction. Because of their nature, disagreements are to be expected and handled with love.

While the difference between dogmatic and guiding beliefs may seem trivial, it is extremely important. (For example, every family has dogmatic and guiding beliefs. Dogma is critical. Guiding is important, but not critical. The easiest way for a family to decipher the difference

between dogma and guiding beliefs is to observe a family in crisis. What is important becomes subservient to what is critical.)

Dogmatic Beliefs

God

We believe that there is one God, who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 14; John 14:26; 1 Peter 1:2)

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus is both human and divine. Jesus is God's only Son, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, voluntarily died on the cross for our sins, and was bodily raised from the dead. He provides the clearest picture/understanding of God that we will ever know, because He was God incarnated among us. He was the wisest person who ever lived, and He is the master of life. (*John 1:1-18; Acts 2:22-41; Philippians 2:1-11*) Every person is invited to become his apprentice in life.

Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son of God. All of Christ's followers are given the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion, giving us the power and motivation to pursue the life Christ teaches us about. (*Luke 11:13; John 16:13; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:11*)

Guiding Beliefs

Spiritual Life Today

We believe that God is still active today and communicating through the Bible, His creation, applied wisdom, and fellow apprentices.

We believe that there are spiritual forces of evil at work in the world seeking to distract us from being apprentices to Jesus, his teachings, and his way of life.

People

We believe all human beings have dignity because they were created by God in His own image and have great worth because they are valued by God beyond our ability to measure. (*Genesis 1:27, 31, Psalm 8:3-6, John 3:16, Romans 5:8*).

We believe this world also has pain and suffering because human beings have fallen and sinned, and are estranged from God, from each other, from ourselves, and from creation. (*Genesis 3:17, Romans 3:23, Colossians 1:21, Titus 3:3*)

We believe that apprenticeship to Jesus, his teachings, and his way of life is normal and expected for every person who claims Jesus as their Master and Savior. This is a process that involves learning and discerning how to apply Jesus' wisdom to our concrete, everyday lives. Spiritual disciplines and practices are used by God to create the atmosphere where God's Spirit can lead people into all truth, wisdom.

We believe every person is responsible before God for his/her own spiritual journey, their choices, and the consequences.

We believe God does not intend for sin and suffering to get the last word but is at work to redeem and reconcile what He has made. (*Isaiah 11:6–9, Colossians 1:21–23, Revelation 21:1–5, John 16:33*)

We believe that people can be apprentices to Jesus before they believe everything that he taught and everything about who He is. In the gospels, people followed Jesus long before they believed everything that he taught and who he was. We also believe that God's Spirit is at work in this process, and his Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment.

We believe continual spiritual growth is normal and expected for all apprentices of Jesus.

Church

We believe the church is the gathering of Jesus' apprentices who encourage, challenge, and love one another on the journey of following Jesus. Because we are all "in process" and nobody has arrived, we are honest about the journey, our struggles and successes.

We believe the local church appoints leaders who serve under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to define a minimum set of guiding principles that defend the dogma and the apprenticeship of those who associate with the Church. The role of leadership is to equip and empower people to become apprentices to Jesus. (Ephesians 4)

Bible

We believe God has revealed the truth about Himself in the Old and New Testament. It is a collection of sixty-six unique books. These books were written over a one-thousand-year period in three languages, by widely different types of people, with different literary styles, and for different reasons. (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21*) The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ, and His two-part answer to the question of "what is the greatest commandment in the law?" Love God. Love People.

Eternity

We live in hope because one day Jesus will return, love and justice will prevail, and God will set the world right. (Matthew 24:30–31, Luke 12:40, Romans 8:37–39, Revelation 21:1–5)

Debatable Beliefs

Debatable does not mean that anything not listed as Dogma or Guiding is “up-for-grabs.” It means that it is not CENTRAL to what we believe (dogma) nor does it provide the framework (guiding principle) for how we “work out our faith” in community.

In other words, our dogma and guiding beliefs provide the clear center (Jesus Christ) and the guiding beliefs by which we can have healthy discussions, and sometimes confrontations, as we each seek to live according to God's will and direction.

This approach is much messier, and tension filled, than giving simple answers to complex situations. However, as you read through the New Testament of the Bible, you will find that this approach, and tension, was common in the church and among Jesus's followers.

Final Thoughts

As our world becomes increasingly complex and nuanced, many Christian organizations are adding more things to their dogma to clear up any confusion. While this approach appears to make sense, we believe that it goes against the model of Jesus.

The Pharisees and religious teachers in Jesus' employed this approach, and Jesus continually pushed back on it with a simple dogma “love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself.”

We seek to follow Jesus' approach and put Jesus (The Divine Son of God, Master of Life, Crucified and Resurrected) and apprenticeship to him as our dogma.

Our understanding is that Christ's promise of Salvation gives us tremendous freedom – freedom to lift Him up in every situation – and not spend our time arguing about rules like Pharisees. Clearly, some Guiding Beliefs are necessary, especially for instructing new believers as well as those seeking guidance as they grow in their apprenticeship to Jesus. We cannot major in the minors, as they say, but need to vigorously defend the major principles of our faith for the glory of God and the salvation of those who seek Him.