

# Camp Northward: Statement of Beliefs



## **The Bible:**

We believe the 66 books of the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, are given by God's inspiration and that in the original writings they are without error. We believe the Scriptures originated with God but were written using humans as the means and thus speak with the authority of God while reflecting the backgrounds, cultures, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. They are the unique, reliable, and the final authority on all matters of Christian faith and practice.

## **God:**

We believe in one true God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **Jesus Christ:**

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and, in His incarnation was also fully man; having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. We believe He was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now acts as the only mediator between God and people.

## **The Holy Spirit:**

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity, is to apply to people the saving work of Christ. He does this by bringing conviction of a person's need

for the forgiveness of Christ. He regenerates their heart and then indwells them when they believe and are baptized. His ongoing work is to guide, lead, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

## **Humanity:**

We believe that people were created in the image of God for a loving relationship with God in His eternal kingdom. However, beginning with the first man & woman (Adam and Eve), we have all rebelled against God and chosen to go our own independent way. Mankind is thereby alienated from God and now suffers the corruption of our nature because of our sin. The effects of this fall upon our intended relationship with God can only be reversed through faith in Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, and life in Gods Eternal Kingdom.

## **Salvation:**

We believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us from the eternal penalty of our sin separation from God. No amount of good works or human effort can restore us from our state of eternal alienation from God. It is only by God's grace that we are saved from this state of alienation, and this grace is appropriated by a change of heart toward God's authority in our lives and by faith in Jesus to forgive our sins. The Biblical pattern for expressing one's personal decision to place faith in Jesus Christ and turn from sin involves confessing Him as our Lord, living according to His Word, and water baptism by immersion, which re-enacts the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is the concrete means by which we entrust and commit ourselves to God through Christ in a visible, historical moment.

## **The Church:**

We believe that there is only one true Church universally composed of all people who have been regenerated and forgiven by Jesus Christ. It is reflected by a diversity of believers working and serving together, using their gifts to build one another up, forming the parts of the body of Christ, the Church. Scripture commands believers to gather together in local congregations for scriptural teaching, fellowship, prayer, mutual encouragement, worship of God, and disciple-making. Wherever God's people meet in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the obligation under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs in obedient submission to the will of God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God.

## **Relationships:**

We believe that God made us for relationships, with God himself and with our fellow human beings. We emphasize the two greatest commandments which are to love God with all of one's heart, mind, soul, and strength; and to love others as we love ourselves. Our love for others, especially other Christians, is the clearest demonstration to the world that we are true disciples. Love is the answer God has provided to the many problems faced by humanity. God's love for us and His empowerment in us is to love others as He loves us.

## **Discipleship and Faithfulness:**

We believe that the distinguishing characteristic of those who live in God's kingdom is Christ-likeness. Discipleship is the fundamental ministry of the local church which facilitates the development of such people. Love for others displayed in ministering to the poor, reaching out to people who are spiritually lost, serving others, practicing forgiveness, and the like are all signs of the presence of God's kingdom and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Those with genuine faith are known by the fruit of their lives and their pattern of faithfulness to Jesus and His commandments. Thus, the local church becomes a counter-culture community, whose members live Christ-centered lives.

## **Baptism:**

We believe that baptism by immersion is declared in scripture as the God-ordained method for giving one's heart to God, trusting Christ, and receiving God's promises. We emphasize that God looks at the heart. So, while we affirm that scripture binds us to uphold this biblical teaching of baptism, we also acknowledge that God is sovereign and saves people as He sees fit. Baptism, as taught and practiced in scripture, is the normative method given to enable a person to give his or her heart to God and become a Christian. It is a requirement before one becomes a formal part of the local church family. We acknowledge that there are circumstances where God can save people by looking at the heart, apart from the normative mode of baptism. God is not bound to baptism, but we are.