



TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH

Philosophy of Ministry

The non-negotiable principles that define our priorities and determine our practices

Table of Contents

Basis of Ministry	1
A High View of God.....	1
A High View of Scripture.....	2
A High View of the Church	3
Who We Are.....	4
The Church is the Body of Christ—Universal.....	4
The Church is the Body of Christ—Assembled.....	4
Why We Exist.....	6
What Our Purpose Is	7
To Exalt God	7
To Edify Believers	7
To Evangelize Nonbelievers	7

Basis of Ministry

This document is written to offer a meaningful explanation of the principles that govern the ministries of Trinity Bible Church (TBC). These principles are drawn from a careful investigation of Scripture for both explicit teaching concerning ministry and any implicit standards practiced by the early church. Accordingly, these ministry principles find their source and limits solely from an historical-grammatical exegetical study of Scripture. They define why we do what we do as a church and furnish a framework for making ministry decisions and evaluating ministry priorities.

This document, therefore, defines who we are, why we exist, and what our purpose is. These particulars are addressed after the following discussion concerning the basis of ministry.

We believe that perspectives are foundational to practices. They reflect presuppositions, which determine and drive principles, interpretations, and priorities in ministry. We commit to maintain, by faith, the following fundamental views as the basis of ministry:

A High View of God

Nothing will corrupt a church like a low view of God. God is holy, righteous, just, totally and specifically sovereign, all-powerful, ever-present, all-knowing, gracious, loving, longsuffering, merciful, kind, compassionate, and the personal standard of good. God is triune in all His perfections—one essence expressed in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is infinitely transcendent and yet personally immanent, the very fountain of all personhood, communication, relational joy, and life. God is the world's only ultimate and final Creator, Sustainer, Sovereign, Savior, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Judge.

A High View of Sin and Salvation

A high view of God necessitates a high view of sin and salvation. God's majestic holiness should incite a reverent fear and awe at the thought of Him—He is altogether other. God's moral holiness should arrest the human soul in the apprehension that all people are deserving of God's wrath because of man's own personal rebellious sin against Him. The terrifying truth of eternal damnation is a necessary consequence of sin. These truths are essential to our purpose as a church. The church is the herald of the gospel, the good news that God, who is holy, forgives sinners through a substitute (1 Tim 3:15; 4:10). For God to be both just and the justifier of sinners, a perfect, sinless substitute had to be offered in the stead of all who would be pardoned (Rom 3:21-26)—that substitute can be none other than Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ alone fulfills the absolute requirement of sinless human perfection—the only human life free from all moral blemish and perfectly outfitted with all righteousness. There would be no acceptable human substitute and therefore no gospel if it were not for the perfections of the only God-man (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22-24; 3:18)—the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5). A right view of the gospel demands an immeasurably high view of Christ.

A High View of Christ—as God

Christ is God manifest in human flesh, the second person of the Trinity. While grace is comprehensively free to the sinner, it is incomprehensively costly to God. Any ministry of the gospel must therefore maintain Christ

as preeminent in all things (Col 1:18-19). Christ is called by the names of God (Mt 3:3; Jn 8:58), manifests the attributes of God (Jn 10:30; Heb 7:3), demonstrates the abilities and actions of God (Jn 1:3; 5:21), speaks with the authority of God (Mt 9:1-8; Jn 10:33), and receives worship as God (Jn 5:23)—Christ must be viewed in the church as nothing less than God. Accordingly, the Church is Christ’s—His body (Eph 5:23; Col 1:18), His precious possession (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18-19), and His bride (Eph 5:25-32; Rev 19:7).

A High View of the Holy Spirit—as God

Any gospel ministry must also maintain a high view of the Holy Spirit, who is God—the third person of the Trinity—interfacing and fellowshiping with us in spirit. The Holy Spirit is crucial to the church as He is the very breath, life, and power of the church (Eph 2:22; cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). He is God, who regenerates us (Jn 3:3-8), seals us for the day of redemption (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:22), sustains us (Eph 3:16), and sanctifies us (Gal 5:22-25; Phil 2:13); who should not be insulted (Heb 10:29), lied to (Acts 5:3-4), quenched (1 Thess 5:19), or otherwise grieved (Eph 4:30).

The Most Essential Basis of Ministry

We believe that a high view of God is the most essential basis of ministry. A high view of God requires a contrastingly humble view of mankind, an arresting view of sin, and a glorious view of salvation. This promotes the growth of both humility and holiness in the church. A high view of God guards from the toleration of sin, the focus on man-centered ministries, and false worship. A high view of God is indispensable to maintaining the priorities of ministry, since all things are properly answerable to, and must serve to promote, the glory of God. We are therefore committed to evaluating every motive and ministry in the church against the pursuit of the supremacy of God.

A High View of Scripture

A high view of God both derives from, and demands, a high view of Scripture. Only through a holy and faithful study of the Bible can one come to the objective and authoritative revelation of God. The Scripture alone is the only true and sufficient authority in the Christian faith. Moreover, it is our only sure guide of the will and way of the Lord.

We believe that the sixty-six books of the canonical Scriptures (the Bible) are verbally inspired by God (God-breathed) and altogether inerrant (without error) in their original manuscripts and therefore infallible (unfailing). They are fully sufficient and indefinitely relevant. The Bible is the exclusively authoritative source for understanding the purpose and commission of Christ’s church.

A high view of Scripture requires trust and obedience to it in the ministry. It guards from subjective personal experience having authority over what is written. The diligent and proper study of the Scripture is the ultimate source of doctrine and resolution to theological disputes. Church ministries ought to be determined exegetically; that is, according to carefully derived conclusions from God’s word through a literary historical-grammatical hermeneutic (science of interpretation), not by the intuition or mere consensus of people.

The ministry must be dictated by principles taught in Scripture. While trends, movements, and pragmatic strategies continue to multiply and evolve, the Scriptures remain our highest authority, sufficient revelation of God, and surest guide in all things—especially ministry. This does not eliminate or stifle creativity in ministry; it urges the dynamic exercise of discernment. Decisions in the church are made in light of ministry goals, goals are based upon priorities, and priorities are based upon Scripture. In short, a high view of

Scripture is crucial to the basis of ministry. We are therefore committed to evaluating every motive and ministry in the church by the prescriptions and principles given in Holy Scripture.

A High View of the Church

A third view that is crucial to the basis of ministry is a high view of the church. Ministries are in constant danger of gravitating toward man-centered views, which ultimately degrade the church and make her a servant of people rather than God. The purpose and priorities of the church are immediately altered by the church's understanding of who she is and who God has called her to be in Christ.

Precious to Christ

The church is Christ's precious possession; this is who she is by divine proclamation (1 Pet 2:9). As saints, saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should love the church—Christ's church—for what is precious to Christ should be precious to us. The church is not a building, a place, or an object; it is the people of God, redeemed in Christ, and "called out" to bear witness to Jesus Christ in this world. The church is precious and is to be loved—that is those who appear lovable and unlovable, spiritually mature and immature, faithfully strong and weak; thus, the greatest and the least who profess faith in Christ are to be loved.

So precious to Christ is she, that He calls her His bride (Rev 21:9). We should love her because Christ "loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). The church is Christ's precious "possession" (Titus 2:14) chiefly because He purchased her "with His own blood" (Ac 20:28), which is "precious" (1 Pet 1:19). His blood is precious and by an act of inestimable grace through His redeeming purchase, has rendered His church precious, wherever she may be represented without distinction.

Temple of the Living God

The church is the temple of the living God; this is who she is to be in practice (1 Cor 3:16-17). According to Scripture, the church is exhorted: "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,' says the Lord. 'AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you'" (2 Co 6:14-17). As the temple of the living God, the living church is to be the dwelling place of God on earth, the place where sinners encounter God, the grand testimony and witness to God's presence and provision, the place of worship, the house of prayer, and the host of the Word of God—the herald of the gospel.

A high view of the church guards her against secular influences (that are biblically inappropriate), man-centered ministries, infidelity to the call, lethargy concerning the commission, apathy of worship, and poor stewardship of the gospel, the saints, and material resources. A high view of the church promotes greater solemnity in leadership, authenticity and love in fellowship, accountability among members, and a more compelling biblical testimony in the community.

In sum, we believe that a high view of the church is essential to the basis of ministry. The biblical portrayal of the church, her roles and responsibilities, is discussed in further detail in the following sections.

Who We Are

Our Understanding of the Church

The church is appreciated in two distinct though related conceptions: (1) *as universal* and (2) *as local*. A proper understanding of this dynamic is imperative to a proper application of the Scripture on the subject.

The Church is the Body of Christ—Universal

The church should first be identified as that grand universal company of all the redeemed in Christ. There is, and always has been, only one true church. The universality of the church transcends all temporal and earthly boundaries of distinction, uniting all believers to Christ and through Him to one another in the Spirit. “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13). Just as there is only one Christ, one Holy Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one hope, one call, so there is only “one body” of Christ—His church (Eph 4:4-6).

The universal church is the only institution that our Lord promised to build and to bless: “I also say to you ... I will build My church;” (Matt. 16:18). The Scripture is clear that Christ is “head of the church” (Eph 5:23) and the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet 5:4; cf. John 10:11) of His people. A Christ-centered ministry will always maintain this most essential doctrine in its teaching and practice.

The Church is the Body of Christ—Assembled

The universal church finds its only practical expression in the local assembly of redeemed people. Conceptually the church is universal in principle and local in practice. There cannot be one without the other. The universal body is the summation of all true believers from all local bodies, while the local body is a miniature sample of the universal. The critical dynamic is that the exhortations and examples given in the New Testament to the church must be received and implemented in local assemblies. The divinely ordained government and authority structure of the church likewise corresponds to each individual assembly; there is no universal authority on earth today that is over the church. The roles and responsibilities of overseers and deacons only make sense in the context of a local assembly. Moreover, the basic ground of all church life is couched in the context of a local assembly. The daily practice of love, discipleship, fellowship, service, the ordinances, accountability, financial support and stewardship, edification, exhortation, admonishment, and encouragement cannot be stewarded at the universal scope—these practical instructions are unmistakably given for practice in local assemblies.

Made precious by the loving sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the local church represents a regional gathering for the redeemed where precious worship and spiritual fellowship occurs. Hebrews 10:22-25 instructs us,

“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, ... and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

The local assembling of believers is to be upheld and esteemed highly for Christ’s sake and for the sake of His people. The local church is identified as a realm of spiritual fellowship; a context for true communion. It fosters unity (Phil 2:1-4), brotherly love (Rom 12:10), accountability (Matt 18:17), and the necessary

strengthening to strive together for the same purpose of the gospel (Phil 1:27). The church also serves as the environment where spiritual edification and growth occur (1 Pet 2:1), and where spiritual leadership develops and matures (2 Tim 2:2). These blessed pursuits are facilitated not in the universal body, but in the local assembly.

We Are a Local Church

Appreciating the church in both of its conceptions, TBC identifies itself as a local assembly of redeemed people—sinners saved solely by the grace of the one true God through the only Christ, Jesus our Lord. We acknowledge our responsibility as a local representation of the universal body of Christ to strive in the fundamental pattern laid down by the apostles and preserved for us in the New Testament. We are a local church called to reverently represent the character and commission of the universal church.

The church is not a human institution. It does not manufacture its own purpose nor set its own goals. The church is a body of people who have been brought into a special relationship with God through the work of reconciliation by the Lord Jesus Christ personally realized through regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

Why We Exist

"We exist to promote Christ for God's glory and man's joy."

Trinity Bible Church exists to promote the preeminence of Jesus Christ in the lives of people, through knowing, living, and speaking the truth in love, for the glory of God and the joy of all in Him.

The supreme end of our existence, as individuals and as a church, is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. This is the underlying reason for why we do what we do, and therefore all ministry motives and decisions must be measured by it. We temporarily remain on this earth, existing in this world, to labor in spreading a passion for God, through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit. We exist to love God and be used of God to love people, revealing the love of God to the world in order that God may be glorified and those in the world might come to love God and enjoy Him forever.

WE All of us who are committed to the regular practice of assembling together as a church (known as Trinity Bible Church).

EXIST Individually and as a church.

TO PROMOTE Meaning: to proclaim, promulgate, publicize, propagate, disseminate, broadcast, make known, spread a passion for, advance the cause of, and overall exalt, magnify, and glorify. This includes both the advance *of* and *in* the gospel; evangelism and discipleship; coming to Christ and growing in Christ; to be used of God for His work of justification and sanctification in the lives of people.

CHRIST Jesus of Nazareth being the distinctive Personality of Christianity; the Second Person of the Trinity; the only God-man; God who took on humanity. Though God, He is not to be confused with the Father or Holy Spirit. As God, He is not to be misconstrued as merely man or as God without true humanity. Our ministry is distinctively Christian—to promote God through Christ (Jn 14:6).

FOR Promoting Christ glorifies God; it serves as both a means and an end. Therefore, we could summarily say that "we exist to promote Christ;" but rightly conceived, even this serves to promote God's glory and man's joy, to which this "for" points.

GOD'S GLORY Meaning the glory that we as His creatures, duly indebted through redemption, owe to the triune God; not exclusively the Father, but including the Son and the Holy Spirit, such that we ascribe all glory and honor and praise to God the Father through Christ the Son by the Holy Spirit.

AND We acknowledge that in the wisdom of God, glorifying God ministers to the deepest of all human needs; these are ordered but not mutually exclusive.

MAN'S JOY Meaning the ultimate blessing of knowing and glorifying God, which is also the delight of God; that our deepest and most profound satisfaction and delight be found in knowing, loving, and glorifying God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

What Our Purpose Is

What exactly is the purpose that the church is to fulfill? Exactly what is a ministry to accomplish? What are the biblical priorities of the church? The answers to these questions are embodied in what may be called the mission of the church. The mission of the church must first be comprehended before any ministry can properly fulfill its purpose.

To Exalt God

The supreme purpose of human existence is to worship God, to exalt and glorify Him. The desire to worship God, in spirit and truth, is a key characteristic of the soul that has been redeemed. This is the appropriate response to grace; acceptable and sanctifying. It is exemplified by the greatest of all commandments, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mk 12:30).

The church is the company of redeemed sinners set apart chiefly to worship God. This is the first great priority of the church, the grand terminus of all ministry—all means serve this ultimate end.

To Edify Believers

People are brought into relationship with God in order to grow in relationship to God. The second priority of the church is to grow in God-oriented devotion, discipline, depth, discernment, and deeds.

As a living organism, a healthy church is one that grows spiritually; it is one that is united in purpose and plan, and is actively and constantly conforming into the likeness of Christ. The express purpose of a minister is to “proclaim [Christ], warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col 1:28).

The Scripture clearly teaches that the church is charged with the high responsibility of “making disciples” (Matt 28:19), that is disciplined followers of Jesus Christ who are baptized in His name and taught to observe all that He commanded (Matt 28:20). True disciples of Christ will continue in His word (John 8:31), pursuing spiritual growth and maturity, which is the building up or edification of the church (Eph 4:12, 16). Just as any human body must be fed, nourished, and strengthened in order to perform the work set before it, so it is with the body of Christ, His church. The church must be properly edified before she can properly worship and serve as a witness to the world.

We evangelize to make disciples and we disciple to make worshippers (though it is God at work in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure; cf. Phil 2:13)—this is the second great priority of the church.

To Evangelize Nonbelievers

Understood properly, evangelizing nonbelievers in witnessing is an extension of exalting the Lord in worship. God is glorified through the faithful witness to Christ by individuals seeking to honor and obey His command in love and gratitude. The church is to be a lighthouse, actively and continually witnessing to the saving grace of Jesus Christ by shining the light of the gospel in its community and surrounding regions. In an effort to contribute to the proclamation of the gospel in remote regions, missions and missionaries should be supported, but not at the displacement of the local mission field.

The church is charged with the responsibility to carry out the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46; John 17:18), in personal suffering and service. The book of Acts demonstrates repeatedly the pattern of corporate evangelism; it is portrayed as the heart and soul of the New Testament church. The command, responsibility, expectation, and commissioning are not optional to the church or individuals. It is essential “that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47–48).

Of the three priorities of the church, this is the only one that cannot take place in heaven. This is the charter of our mission on earth. God has redeemed and placed people in His church to solemnly testify to the gospel of the grace of God in order that He may receive the praise that He deserves and that people from the world may receive His glorious grace through Christ to enjoy Him forever. The church exists to increase God’s glory in the world and evangelism is an essential part of that commission. We adopt the high purpose of our missionary efforts, both near and far, as was stated long ago: “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His sufferings.” Christ suffered on behalf of sinners; they need to know—we are the messengers.

Our purpose, then, is to (1) worship God, (2) grow in our worship of God, and (3) lovingly labor in calling others to become worshippers of God.