



TWELVE  
TRAITS  
*of a* BIBLICAL CHURCH




# BIBLICAL PREACHING & TEACHING



A church is characterized by biblical preaching and teaching. The church regards the Bible as the supreme, controlling authority over all that it believes and does, and the life of a church is saturated with faithful Bible teaching. Such teaching is central to the weekly gatherings of the church, and it consists of the exposition and application of Scripture. A church holds to the inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency and clarity of Scripture, and interprets each text of the Bible responsibly in context. Preaching the whole counsel of God across all of Scripture is non-negotiable to the life of the church. We stand in awe of God's Word, we are formed by it, and we hold fast to it.



# BIBLICAL PRAYER



A church is characterized by biblical prayer. Members of the church pray both privately and corporately. In their prayers, they worship God, confess their sins, thank God for His blessings, intercede for others, and ask God to provide their own needs. A church prays fervently and frequently. Prayer must mark who the church is and undergird every single thing the church does. When we pray for that which can only be accomplished by the power of God, we will experience what can only be attributed to the glory of God. It must be said of MBC what was said of the early church – “they devoted themselves to prayer.” If we miss this, we miss everything.




# BIBLICAL EVANGELISM



A church is characterized by biblical evangelism. People come to Christ and become a part of the church only when they hear the full biblical message of the Gospel and respond in repentance and faith. These followers of Christ then share the Gospel with those apart from Christ. In the church, we want to preach the Gospel faithfully every single Sunday when we gather together. At the same time, our evangelistic strategy is not only based on bringing people to a building to hear the Gospel, but also on sending thousands of people out from a building every week with the Gospel, filled with the Spirit, to spread that Gospel wherever they live.




# BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP



A church is characterized by biblical discipleship. Members of the church intentionally invest in one another's lives to grow to maturity in Jesus Christ. Every member of the church needs to be equipped to grow as a disciple of Jesus and to give their lives to making disciples of Jesus. We grow as disciples by learning and obeying the Bible personally, and in small and large group community. The church exists to help men, women, and children move from exploring Christianity to believing in Christ to growing in Christ to multiplying the life and love of Christ in others. Everything we do in the church is aimed toward helping every member become a disciple-maker.



# BIBLICAL MEMBERSHIP



A church is characterized by biblical membership. The members consist only of people who give credible evidence of repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who have been baptized as believers. Biblical church members are committed to one another to assemble faithfully together with one another and to be the body of Christ to one another. Every follower of Christ biblically and practically needs to be a member of a local church. This means far more than merely having one's name on a roll somewhere. Biblically, this means identifying oneself as a part of a local body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) that is committed to being and doing all that Christ has called His church to be and do. Practically, this means MBC must have strong processes for affirming and equipping followers of Christ as members of His church.



# BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

A church is characterized by biblical leadership. The Bible recognizes two types of leaders in the church: pastors/elders/overseers and deacons/deaconesses. In the New Testament, the words pastor, elder, and overseer are used interchangeably, and refer to the same office. The qualifications for these leaders are given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. They must be examples of faithful discipleship, and they must hold firmly to sound doctrine. They lead under the authority of Christ, teach the Word of Christ, care for the body of Christ, and model the character of Christ. According to Scripture, pastors/elders/overseers must be men. Scripture is clear that not everyone is gifted and called to teach and lead in the church, but all gifts are equally honorable and equally necessary to the church. The consistent pattern in the New Testament is for churches to have a plurality of pastors/elders/overseers. Deacons/Deaconesses are servants of the church whose qualifications are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They meet needs according to God's Word, support the ministry of the Word, and unify the church around the Word. In order to be a biblical church, MBC must appoint, affirm, follow, and pray for biblical leaders across the church.



# BIBLICAL ORDINANCES




A church is characterized by the biblical ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and it is only administered to those who give credible evidence that they are born-again believers in Jesus Christ. All believers are expected to be baptized. The Lord's Supper is celebrated regularly by a healthy church in remembrance of the death of Jesus, as a visible sermon of the gospel, and in anticipation of His return.





# BIBLICAL WORSHIP



A church is characterized by biblical worship. It offers to God worship that is acceptable to Him according to His Word, with reverence, awe and joy. A church sings psalms, hymns and spiritual songs whose content is saturated with biblical truth. Its worship includes the public reading of Scripture, the testimonies of God's people, and prayer. A church's worship also includes corporate fasting. Biblical worship prioritizes biblical revelation, spiritual direction, community participation, reverent affection, honest confession, gospel celebration, intentional intercession, and global commission. Every facet of the church's worship aims to glorify God and edify His people.




# BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP



A church is characterized by biblical fellowship. Members of the church love each other, encourage one another, and build each other up. We care for one another, serve one another, and bear each other's burdens. We are kind to one another and forgive each other. We teach, admonish, and exhort one another with the Word of God. We stir one another up to love and good works. We are involved in one another's lives and know each other well enough to be fruitfully involved in one another's discipleship. Particularly in a church the size of MBC, we must work hard together to cultivate community with one another beyond merely gathering once a week for worship. Such community is necessary for each of us individually to grow in Christ and all of us together to display His love to the world around us.



# BIBLICAL ACCOUNTABILITY & DISCIPLINE



A church is characterized by biblical accountability and discipline. Members of the church hold one another accountable for their obedience to the word of God, and leaders of the church watch over the flock that has been entrusted to them. When necessary, the church exercises church discipline according to the instructions given in Scripture, always praying and laboring for restoration of the erring brother or sister. The church, then, needs strong biblical membership, fellowship, and discipleship processes that promote ongoing, formative church discipline alongside periodic restorative church discipline carried out by the members and leaders of the church. Loving one another in the church involves humbly sharing responsibility for one another's holiness in our lives.




# BIBLICAL GIVING



A church is characterized by biblical giving. Members of the church give freely of their resources for the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the advance of the Gospel around the world. We give as an expression of God's worship and as the overflow of God's grace. When we give, our hearts are changed, the church is edified, and God is glorified. We know that where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also (Matthew 6:21). If we want God's heart for the greater Washington area and if we want God's heart for the world, then we will give for the spread of God's glory in greater Washington and around the world.



# BIBLICAL MISSION



A church is characterized by biblical mission. Global mission is not a compartmentalized program in the church for a select few people who are called to it. The local church exists for the accomplishment of global mission. God has organized the church not only to share the Gospel and make disciples locally, but it is also organized and actively involved in taking the Gospel to the nations. Therefore, we all pray, give, and go right where we live and wherever God leads for the spread of God's praise among all the peoples of the world. As every member of the church walks in obedience to the Great Commission, He leads us some members to go short-term, mid-term, and long-term to other places, particularly among people where the gospel has not yet gone. MBC gladly sends out her members to make disciples and multiply churches across Washington, D.C., and around the world in anticipation of the day when every nation, tribe, and tongue will gather around God's throne and sing His praise for His salvation. This is the aim for which Jesus died, and this is the aim for which we live.





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