



## CLOSED-HANDED BELIEFS

At Ax Church, we have beliefs which we refer to as “closed-handed” and “open-handed” beliefs. Closed-handed beliefs are ones that we will not budge on. There is no room for negotiation on these topics. Open-handed beliefs are ones that we understand Christians have differing opinions on and accept discussion on those topics. The following list contains our closed-handed beliefs that are nonnegotiable.

### **THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD**

The Old and New Testament are inspired by God, the only written revelation from God to man. The Bible is infallible and the authoritative rule of faith and conduct for mankind (II Timothy 3:15-17, I Thessalonians 2:13 & II Peter 1:21).

### **THERE IS ONE TRUE GOD**

God is called by many different names because of the different dimensions of His personality, but God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). God is super-dimensional and eternally self-existent (John 8:54-59). God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He is the creator of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1&2). While God is one, He has revealed Himself in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

### **JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD**

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God. The Scripture declares his virgin birth (Matthew 1:18-23); His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26 & I Peter 2:22 & I John 3:4,5); His miracles (Acts 2:22 & 10:37-38); His substitutionary death on the cross (II Corinthians 5:21 & I Peter 2:24 & I Corinthians 15:4); His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:1-6 & I Corinthians 15:4); His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9,11 & Philippians 2:9-11).

### **THE FALL OF MAN**

Man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). However, by a voluntary act of the will, Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Genesis 3:6). That first sin had several repercussions. Man was excommunicated from the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23), a curse was pronounced (Genesis 3:14-19), the process of physical death began (Genesis 2:17), and man died spiritually (Romans 5:12-19). Sin separated humankind from God (Ephesians 2:11-18) and left man in a fallen or sinful condition (Romans 3:23).

### **THE SALVATION OF MAN**

The only means of salvation is Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12 & John 14:6). He died on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins (I Peter 2:24). He offers each of us a pardon for our sins (Hebrews 9:26) and wants us to become children of God (John 1:12). When we put our faith in Christ, it triggers a spiritual chain reaction. We become the Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). Our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 3:5). We become citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20-21). We are given eternal life (John 3:16). We are adopted and become children of God (Gal. 4:4-7). Our sins are forgiven and forgotten (Heb. 8:12). We are credited with the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:4-5). We are born-again (John 3:3). God takes ownership of us (I Cor. 6:20). We receive an eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14 & I Peter 1:3-5). The evidence of salvation is two-fold. The internal evidence is the direct witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). The external evidence is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). We become a new creation (II Cor. 5:17) and are transformed into the image of Christ (II Cor. 3:18).

# CLOSED-HANDED BELIEFS, CONT.

## **BAPTISM IN WATER**

The Scripture teaches that all who repent and believe in Christ are to be baptized by immersion (Matthew 28:19). Baptism is a public profession of faith in Christ. It is symbolic of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is a declaration to the world that we have died to sin and have been raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

## **COMMUNION**

The Lord's table consists of two elements: the bread and cup. Those elements are symbolic of the body and blood of Christ. Communion is a memorial of Christ's sufferings on the cross and a celebration of our salvation. It is an opportunity for a believer to examine himself and experience forgiveness.

## **THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION**

The Church is the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-27) and has a three-fold purpose: To evangelize the world (Acts 1:8 & Mark 16:15-16), to worship God (I Cor. 12:13), and to equip for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16 & I Cor. 12:28, 14:12).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The nine fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) are the by-product of a Spirit-filled life and evidence of spiritual maturity. The nine gifts of the Spirit are different manifestations of the Spirit to build up the body (I Cor. 12:1-11). We are instructed to diligently seek the gifts (I Cor. 12:31, 14:1), but they must be exercised in an orderly way (I Cor. 14:26-33) in the context of love (I Cor. 13:1-13).

## **THE FINAL JUDGMENT**

There will be a final judgment in which the dead will be resurrected and judged according to their works (Matt. 25:31-46 & Romans 2:1-9). Everyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life, along with the devil and his angels, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). Those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be resurrected and stand at the judgment seat of Christ to be rewarded for their good deeds (I Cor. 4:5).

**“In the essentials we need unity, in the non-essentials we need freedom; but in all things we need love.” — Rupertus Meldenius**