



M28 - BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Updated 07-21-2020

Our most precious understandings and beliefs all rest upon our conviction that the Creator has chosen to reveal Truth to His creation through a book. In that book God speaks about Himself, about our purpose and relationship with Him, about His acts in history and about the future judgment and eternity that every human being will experience.

Our doctrines, our values, and the practices to which we aspire, all flow from this belief about the Scripture, the 66 books of the Bible. In our understanding, God does not and has not revealed universal propositional Truth in any other way than through these inspired Scriptures.

While we do not worship the Scriptures, we are convinced there can be no meaningful worship or understanding of God without a robust commitment to and right understanding of His revealed Word. We believe there is a God, and we believe that in His wisdom He has intentionally chosen essential Truths to bring to His created image-bearers through His Scriptures. Therefore, we affirm these convictions and attitudes toward His inspired Word:

1. It is true and trustworthy. God knows all things. God will not lie or deceive. So, writings supernaturally inspired by Him will be true and accurate in all they describe related to God, Man, history and the future to come.
2. It is straightforward. Since God's purpose in the Bible is to communicate, and since God is not a God of confusion, the Bible will rightly be understood through its plainest sense unless there is internal and obvious evidence that the genre is meant to be figurative.
3. It is given to us for our good. Because the Bible has been given to us by God who is good, following what God has communicated in His Word will lead to our best possible life in every way, for this earthly life and in the Kingdom to come. The Scriptures are "a lamp for our feet and a light for our path," and the best and wisest course for life will always be to follow Scripture as closely and fully as possible. We believe we are to read, study and follow it to experience life ourselves and to bring life to all the families of the earth.
4. It is authoritative. Because God is the Creator of all things, His Word will be the final measure in every situation, for every person, always. It is to be believed by all of His creation and actively followed and obeyed. This is how disciples are to live, submitting all of life to the rule and reign of King Jesus by following the truth of Scripture through the leading of the Holy Spirit. All people, in all ages, will be accountable for their response to the Truth He has graciously given to us in the Bible.

From this foundational view of the Bible, we draw our understanding of God's will for our lives and our churches. As in all cultures and times, the culture of our day questions, challenges or opposes particular Biblical truths that run counter to cultural values. One goal of M28 Alliance is to clearly communicate, illuminate and model the beauty and goodness of these challenged

Biblical truths. In the face of cultural claims, we believe that the Bible, rightly understood and followed, will always lead to the greatest human happiness and good.

This paper is intended to articulate some of those Biblical truths that are being particularly doubted or challenged today, and which we believe to be essential Truths for a full experience of the abundant life God promises to all and wants to bring to all:

1. Gender & Complementarian Issues

- Gender
 - Human life is created to reflect the image of God. God made Man “male and female” as an essential part of this image-bearing purpose. Two genders exist as a reflection of the diversity within the trinitarian God Himself. Thus, we can understand through God’s Word that by God’s intention there are two and only two created genders, male and female, expressed through the physical, biological bodies given by God to each person. Male and female can each express a distinct aspect of the image of God. It is through the God-given gender of either male or female that a person experiences the fullness of their individual God-intended humanity and fulfills their divine purpose as human life (Genesis 1-3).
- Gender Roles
 - Just as relationship within the Godhead is love expressed in complementarian roles, and as Jesus’ relationship with His church is love expressed in complementarian roles, so male and female were created to express this same selfless love in a complementarian expression in marriage. Complementarian gender expression between men and women can have other appropriate expressions in society as well, and complementarian gender roles are prescribed specifically within the life of the church (Genesis 1-3, Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Timothy 2,3).
- God’s Relational Hierarchical Nature and Roles in Human Society
 - God has also created human life to experience goodness through complementarian relational roles in family, the church, the workplace and government. Responsibility for others, accompanied by corresponding authority, is given by God as a means to bring His good into the world. In a similar way, accountability to others, accompanied by corresponding trust and submission, is given by God as a means to bring His good into the world. In their most perfect expression these roles of “responsible for” and “accountable to” are given to be an expression and reflection of God’s complementarian relational nature. The Bible gives divine guidelines and boundaries so that each of these relational roles fulfills its purpose of bringing good to individuals, social structures, and the world (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1; Hebrews 13:17). Therefore, the notions of responsibility and leadership, in connection with cooperation and submission, are divine aspects of human life, intended by God to be an essential aspect of healthy human life.

2. Sexuality & Marriage

- Marriage is created and defined by God with the purpose of revealing the image of His relational nature in the world. Marriage is defined by God as one biological man and

one biological woman united in a life-long covenantal relationship of love (Genesis 1-2, Matthew 19:1-6, Ephesians 5:22-33).

- God intends sexual expression to be present in marriage alone. It represents the picture of relational oneness and is God's means for bringing life into the world. Any sexual expression outside of marriage violates God's divine intention (1 Corinthians 6:12-20).

3. Accuracy related to earthly events – both past and future (John 3:12)

- Past events described in the Bible occurred just as they are described.
- The miracles described in the Bible are historical events that occurred just as they are described.
- The creation of the universe occurred just as the Scriptures describe, in a six-day creation event. The true age of the earth and all of the physical universe is measured in thousands, not billions of years (Genesis 1-11).
- Mankind began with two individuals that came about through a special, personal creative act by God (Genesis 2).
- The entire world was covered with water as the result of a year-long flood, initiated as a judgment of God, resulting in the death of all human and other land dwelling life except for those saved in the Ark described in Genesis (Genesis 6-9).
- Jesus Christ physically resurrected from the dead, ascended bodily into heaven and will return in that same way to the earth.
- Jesus will be the judge of all Mankind, judging every human life according to what they have done.

4. Church Polity

- We believe the Church of Jesus Christ has operated with God's blessing through many forms and types of church government. That tremendous variety of governance is evident in the world today. For the sake of openness and clarity, the Biblical principles and examples that we strive to follow within M28 Alliance churches are stated below:
 - The Bible uses the terms Elder, Pastor, and Overseer (Bishop) to refer to the same office and have the same responsibility in the church.
 - The New Testament describes the church as being led by male elders who are servant-leaders in the church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9).
 - The Bible teaches that the most important requirements for leadership are character based and evidenced by the fruit we see in a man's life and family, while at the same time allowing for different types gifts, roles and ministries to be engaged.
 - Ideally, elder leadership in the church operates in a plurality under the headship of Christ.
 - Final authority in the church resides with those who will give an account to God – understood within M28 to be the elders operating in the office referenced in 1 Timothy 3.