

The Milton Bible Church Mandate
“Making Disciples – Transforming Lives”

Revised November 2020

Our Philosophy of Ministry

Where are we going?
How are we getting there?
Who is coming with us?

This document is a “work in progress”. It captures the crucial unchanging foundation that our church is built upon. We believe if we lay a strong foundation, it gives us an opportunity to build an incredible church that will prevail for generations to come.

This document also deals with issues of style and details of organization that may need to be reworked or expanded as we grow and develop as a congregation. This document contains the Milton Bible DNA and is important that everyone at MBC read, remember, and implement these plans

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.” 1 Corinthians 3:10

Why is this document so crucial?

“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10

It’s easy for a church to get out of focus. When that happens, blurred vision causes ineffective efforts and competing agendas generate disagreement, discord, and division.

Every church needs to carefully declare its mandate, its mission, its means, and its methodology if it wants to avoid confusion and disappointed expectations.

While the New Testament provides an overview of how the early church operated, much of the detail has been left in the hands of each local congregation to structure their ministries in a way that they feel maximizes their service to God, each other, and their community. Hence, different congregations have a variety of styles and structures of Christian ministry – something that enables the Body of Christ to minister to a variety of people in ways that meet their differing needs.

Although there may not be one absolute way of “doing church”, it is so important that each church be unified in its own unique vision and style. At MBC we don’t criticize other churches for the way they organize and express themselves, but we feel a great freedom in Christ to become who He has called us to be. Our desire is to be radically biblical in how we follow Jesus – both corporately and personally.

At Milton Bible Church we strongly believe that when your busy rowing the boat, you don’t have time to rock it. And so, we call those people who would like to make this church their spiritual home to rally around the foundational truths contained in this document and to be committed to make them happen. We realize that no one way is going to be perfect, that’s why we must always be open to change. But in our own imperfect way, we need to be fiercely committed to moving in the same direction together.

We think the journey will be great, and we invite you to join us in the journey.

Part One: Where are we Going?

We believe that a great commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a great Church!

Our plan for growing our church comes from the Bible. Here are a few verses that we feel are crucial to growing a great church.

1. The Great Commandment

“And 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. The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 2:30,31

2. The Great Commission

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19,20

3. The Great Example

“...they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people.” Acts 2:42-47

That means that at MBC we will always have room for those who are seeking God, learning to love God, and actively serving God. But we don’t have room for Christian seat warmers.

Where Milton Bible Church is going over the next few years...

Focusing on where we are going must begin by hammering stakes deep into the ground as a community of faith the things that are important to us in belief and practice. These can be defined by 4 clearly stated strategic statements: Mission, Vision, Values and Doctrine.

Our Mission – why we exist

Mission Statement

Milton Bible Church is a Christ centered family dedicated to impacting Milton, Canada, and the nations with the love of the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are on mission together with the Triune God of grace.

Our Bottom line is...

“Making Disciples – Transforming Lives”

Our Vision – who we will be

... is to be a grace filled family of believers who through Word & Spirit intend to build...

A people of healing – our desire is to see relationships recovered, broken lives mended, hurting people healed and released into their new identity in Christ.

A people of gospel proclamation – our desire is to see many people saved and added to the church and become followers of Jesus Christ.

A people of discipleship – our desire is to see individuals come to full Christian maturity bearing fruit in every good work.

A people of leadership training – our desire is to identify spiritual gifts and raise up gifted leaders of all ages who will resource both MBC and the greater kingdom of God.

Our Values – what we practice.

Passionately Biblical

We hold a high view of the Bible, God’s Word, the teaching and preaching of the scriptures and believe it to have transformational power in lives. It is our final authority for our faith and how we live out our life in Christ.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Colossians 1:28,29; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 28

Spirit Filled People

God's people, the church, is where God lives by his Holy Spirit. Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit is vital in us. Not only does He give us new birth as we become Christians, but Jesus wants to fill us with the Holy Spirit. Out of the filling comes gifts that encourage the church, brings power for witness, and empowers a victorious Christian life.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8; John 4:24; Ephesians 5:17,18.

Authentically Relational

We believe that the Triune God of grace has always known community in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are called into that amazing, joyful fellowship through faith in Jesus Christ. So, whatever we are doing, we love being together and newcomers are always welcome.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. John 13:34; John 17:20, 21; Hebrews 10:24;

Ephesians 4:15

Purposefully Missional

We believe in blessing our communities, preaching the gospel, and bringing healing to brokenness. This was Christ's mission on earth, and it is Christ's mission through us.

We are seeking God to bring a passion for His fame in Milton, in Canada and in the nations. The authentic Christian life will be lived in mission.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me*

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives

and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:18,19; Matthew 28:19,20; Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 24:14

Vibrant Worship

When we gather for corporate worship, we understand that it really is an overflow of what is already inside us. We praise God because of who He is and what He has done.

He has saved us, put His Spirit within us, made us His children and promised us glory.

We give glory to God in every aspect of our lives including corporate worship.

"Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,

his praise in the assembly of the godly!

Let Israel be glad in his Maker;

let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

Let them praise his name with dancing,

making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!

*For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with salvation."*

Psalm 149:1-4; 1 Peter 1:8,9.

Grace Filled People

We believe the church is a community of grace led by God's Spirit. In the church we have an opportunity to live out that grace in our relationships with one another, with God and with our community. Grace is the undeserved favour of God towards us. There is a deposit of divine energy in our lives that has brought us out of spiritual death and continues to manifest the favour of God in us.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age", Titus 2:11,12; Hebrews 12:14,15; Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 8:9.

Intentional Diversity

We are building a multigenerational, multicultural church where the nations gather. We believe that God has the nations on His heart and the nations have come to Milton. So, at MBC we welcome a reflection of the worldwide family of God, young and old and the blessing it brings to Christ's Church.

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation 7:9,10; Genesis 12:3

Active Participation

Ways we show our commitment to the building of Christ's church is by giving proportionately according to our resources, serving God's people according to our spiritual gifts & passions, and participating regularly to encourage and worship.

"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7

Unergirded by Prayer

We see prayer as vital and fundamental to all we do.

"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"

Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

Part Two: How are We Getting There?

1. We will be philosophically and stylistically balanced.

“It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.” Ecclesiastes 7:18

Balance is a key principle that is often overlooked and unfortunately sometimes even preached against. Past teaching has sometimes led to the erroneous notion that extremism is equal to godliness.

At Milton Bible Church we believe that our church should be built upon **all** of the core values before mentioned, rather than trying to teeter on just one or two. If we aren't committed to this balance, we run the danger of being an off-balance church that rallies around a single pillar such as,

- a) The Worshipping Worship Church
- b) The Family Reunion Church
- c) The Social Activist Church
- d) The Sunday School Church
- e) The Get-em-Saved Church

In practical terms, let's us look at worship: Our Sunday worship service has a twofold focus: worship and the Word. We love to hear from God and speak to God through both worship and the Word.

In our Sunday Services, we encourage believers to worship openly, genuinely, and vibrantly, and we make room in our meetings for believers to employ their spiritual gifts. We also try to balance our use of time in the service between explicit worship and practical Bible teaching. Our Goal is to be a grace filled church marked by Word and Spirit. So, while we are passionately biblical, we are open to the leading and work of the Holy Spirit amongst us.

2. We will be Elder Led

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” Hebrews 13:17

Clearly the concept of strong servant leadership is thoroughly Biblical, but who are called to be spiritual leaders? At MBC we believe our Elder Team should be the “buck stops here” level of leadership.

The Bible teaches unmistakably that it is up to elders to “*care for God's church*” (I Timothy 3:5) and “*direct the affairs of the church*” (I Timothy 5:17). You'll notice that the Bible always refers to elders in the plural, which indicates their commitment to team leadership. Never do we see one Lone Ranger at the peak of a pyramid in biblical church leadership. That spot is reserved for Jesus alone.

This is why at MBC we consider our “Senior Pastor” to be a fellow elder with the main responsibilities of leading, teaching and equipping.

Each of our elders is involved in church leadership in some specific area of ministry at MBC. But as a larger group they “oversee” the church family and decisions are made as a team through regular meetings.

Overall, the elders are responsible for such things as Vision, Teaching, Shepherding, Protecting, Guiding, Equipping, Leading, Encouraging etc.

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, 1 Timothy 5:17

The heart of an elder is a servant who has one eye on God and one eye on the needs of the people.

3. We will be Servant-Leader Run

“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”
Matthew 12:30

Wow! Those are strong words from Jesus. At MBC we don’t think we are doing anyone a favor by allowing them to have a consumer attitude towards church. According to Jesus, if we are not an active part of the solution, we’re a part of the problem.

In an extensive survey of members of nearly a thousand churches, people were asked to respond to the following question: *“Why does the church exist?”* And the results? 89% said, *“The churches purpose is to take care of my and my family’s needs.”* But that is only half-true.

The Greek word translated “deacon” is diakonos, which literally means “one who serves/ministers/helps”. This word and its derivatives are used 100 times in the NT, yet only translated “deacon” five times (in the ESV). Usually it is simply translated “servant” or “minister” and refers to the responsibility of every follower of Christ.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: 1 Peter 4:10

This Biblical truth lends credibility to this motto: **Every Member Is A Minister!**

This makes sense if each of us as disciples of Christ is seeking to pattern our lives after Jesus...

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (diakoneo), and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

Our goal in this regard is to help turn seekers into saints, consumers into contributors, members into ministers and an audience into an army (a *spiritual* army that is!). And as we are faithful in serving with the gifts God has given us, the Bible promises us that this very activity will be the thing that God uses to strengthen our own faith!

“For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 3:13

We see every member as a servant, each operating out of their giftedness by God’s Holy Spirit. Therefore, as a church we are open to all the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Scriptures, and thus we recognize the gift of leadership that serves to move the kingdom of God forward in community.

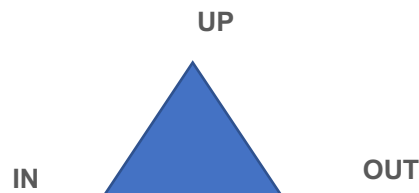
“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”

Ephesians 4:11-13; see Acts 6:1-6

4. We will be Discipleship Grounded

At Milton Bible Church we embrace several methods of discipleship for various ages and stages of the Christian journey. Currently, the Discipleship Pathway at MBC includes Connect Groups, T (Transformation) Groups, and Freedom Session. While our programs and methods may change, our foundational beliefs taught in the scriptures remains the same. We strongly believe that our weekly group gatherings are a vital part of being the church and are essential in contributing to obey the call to make disciples and preach the gospel.

Our **Discipleship Model** is built upon a three-fold focus of Jesus life pattern; “UP, IN and OUT” found in **Luke 6:12-19**.



UP - a vibrant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

v.12 *“In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.”*

IN – a committed loving relationship with other disciples of Jesus and

v.13-16 *“And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles.”*

OUT – a people together who are reaching out with the love of Jesus on mission to proclaim the gospel.

v.17-19 *“And he came down with them and stood on a level place...who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases.”*

Just as all three of these (Up, IN & Out) were a part of the life of Christ, so they should be a part of the life of every disciple of Christ. In fact, missing one of these components is missing the mark of being a genuine Christ follower.

Therefore, three words help every believer to understand how discipleship at MBC works – **Gather – Grow – Go!**

Gather for worship and teaching in a large group setting on Sundays.

Grow through small group involvement and through serving on a ministry team.

Go into all the world to share Christ's saving and healing ministry to all who would receive it.

Hence, we don't think involvement in our "Discipleship Pathway" is an addition to the church; it is a vital part of the life of the church in the purest sense of the word. Like the NT church, our groups are intimate and interactive as well as fully participatory.

"What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up."

I Corinthians 14:26 see Colossians 3:16

So, for example, when it comes to "pastoral care", rather than call upon a single senior pastor or the elders to provide care for the sick, the hurting and the needy, we see the Elders job as being one of equipping the congregation to minister to each other (Ephesians 4:11-13). And we see no better way for immediate, meaningful, and relational "pastoral" care to be given than through our Discipleship ministries.

As you can imagine, then, not being involved in a Connect Group, T-Group, or Freedom Session leaves a person outside the mainstream of ministry at MBC. We believe these groups are the best way to grow disciples and meet people's holistic needs – spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, etc.

And because of their intimate and interactive nature, Groups are also the place where most spiritual gifts can be expressed within the church.

Furthermore, as MBC grows and becomes more active, Sunday mornings become a greater challenge for personal discipleship and more of a time for Teaching and Corporate Worship.

It is, therefore, more and more important that people plug in to the Discipleship Pathway for spiritual accountability, encouragement, and fellowship.

Romans 12:5; Philippians 2:4; Galatians 6:2.

5. We choose to be Interdependent with other Christians

Milton Bible Church is a member of *The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada* (The FEBCC). It began in 1953 with a passionate commitment to Biblical Christianity. The Fellowship consists of some 500 autonomous local Churches across Canada and are bound together by a common "Statement of Faith". While each church is fully independent, we choose to be interdependent, which means we co-operate and join together with others in the Fellowship to accomplish specific goals for the greater good.

MBC works alongside other Christian churches in Milton and cooperates as God gives opportunity to collectively represent a unified church in Milton.

Milton Bible is a member of *The Canadian Centre for Christian Charities* (“The Four C’s”), whose members are committed to a high level of responsible governance and financial accountability.

Part Three: Who’s Coming With us?

1. Those Who Support our Basic Beliefs.

Christians hold a wide variety of positions on many different doctrines. Here’s a brief overview of our position on a broad spectrum of Christian beliefs. For us, these are some non-negotiables...

We affirm the following Statement of faith taken from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

The Holy Scriptures, as originally given by God, are divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy, and constitute the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh; we affirm his virgin birth, sinless humanity, divine miracles, vicarious and atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension, ongoing mediatorial work, and personal return in power and glory.

The salvation of lost and sinful humanity is possible only through the merits of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, received by faith apart from works, and is characterized by regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit enables believers to live a holy life, to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church, the body of Christ, consists of all true believers.

Ultimately God will judge the living and the dead, those who are saved unto the resurrection of life, those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

2. Those Who are Surrendered to Jesus

To know about God is not really the same as knowing him. That’s the point of James 2:19-20, where the author reminds us that no one knows about God better than Satan and his demons, but they have severed intimate relationship with him. Obviously, it’s not enough to agree with a set of doctrines. We must accept the person of Jesus as our Savior and serve him as our Lord.

Jesus also warns against just coming to church to look good on the outside without making a personal commitment to him on the inside. He calls that “hypocrisy”, and so do we (Matthew 23:27,28; Luke 12:1). And let’s face it: having more hypocrites is the last thing any church needs. Whether you call it being “saved”, “born again” or simply becoming a “believer”, the Bible does teach that each of us has a responsibility to respond personally to the call of Christ.

Surrender is Expressed through Obedience.

As a disciple of Christ, we are to be hearers of the Word of God and doers of the Word. Out of a heart of genuine faith comes hands that do what the Lord asks of His people. *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”* James 1:22; 2:18

That is why it is essential to hear the voice of God in our lives, so that we may obey His voice and see the kingdom of God invade the kingdom of earth.

Surrender is Expressed through Baptism

Like a wedding ring or an engagement ring, baptism is an outward symbol of an inner commitment. Acts 3:19 & 1 John 1:7.

At Milton Bible Church we practice baptism by immersion for those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated “baptism” in the Bible is *baptizo* which literally means “to immerse, to dip, to dunk, to plunge”. There is a completely different word in the Greek meaning to sprinkle, splash, or wash – *rhantizo* – but it is never used in the New Testament with reference to Christian baptism.

Baptism doesn’t make a person a Christian, Baptism tells the world that you are a Christian. In Luke 23:40-43, Jesus tells the thief hanging on the cross, *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* There was no opportunity for baptism there, but the thief was saved through his faith. Ephesians 2:8,9, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

It is not our baptism, but our faith that appropriates God’s saving grace in our lives. Just like the wedding ring – wearing one doesn’t make you married but shows that you have already been.

“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.” 1 Peter 3:21-22

3. Lived out by serving in a Family of Christ Followers.

A relationship with Jesus Christ is always marked by both vertical and horizontal commitments. We must love both God and God’s people. *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”* John 13:34 To follow Jesus means to live in a loving committed community.

After Acts 21 the word “disciple” disappears from the Biblical text and the major metaphor used to describe God’s people is the word “family”.

Being God’s spiritual family is both a challenge and a privilege as we strive to fulfill the calling of Christ upon our church to become a spiritual family. 1 John 2:13,14. At Milton Bible Church, we challenge all those who are committed Christ followers and are committed to MBC to join our **Membership**.

Why official church membership?

A) To let the Church know where you stand.

As our church grows it becomes increasingly difficult for Church leaders to keep track of just who is here and just who is ‘along for the ride’. A formal process of church membership helps those in leadership know where your loyalties lie.

B) To let you know where you stand.

The process of church membership is as much about *self-discovery* as it is about *church discovery*. As a person becomes educated about a church *and* then makes an official pledge of support, well, there’s something about becoming an official member that finally settles for that person where their commitments are.

For *many* Christians in history and *today*, persecution was and *is* the filter *that* helps people discover *and* demonstrate the genuineness of their commitment. But without persecution, church membership can become a process that helps people determine the strength of their own commitment.

C) To let others know where you stand.

Membership is a way to declare to those outside the church that you are fully committed to something bigger than yourself. As well, in the event of any legalities arising, our government cannot acknowledge someone’s “attitude” of commitment but needs to refer to actual documented membership. So, we think it’s a good idea to submit to our government’s wishes on this matter, especially since there is no good reason not to.

To put it strongly...

“Church attendance is infected with a malaise of conditional loyalty which has produced an army of ecclesiastical Hitchhikers. The hitchhiker’s thumb says, “You buy the car, pay for repairs and upkeep and insurance, fill the car with gas – and I’ll ride with you. But if you have an accident, you are on your own! And I’ll probably sue.” So, it is with the credo of so many of today’s church attendees: “You go to the meetings and serve on the boards and committees, you grapple with the issues and do the work of the church and pay the bills – and I’ll come along for the ride. But if things do not suit me, I’ll criticize and complain and probably bail out – my thumb is always out for a better ride.”

Kent Hughes, as quoted in Christianity Today, May ’92.

Congratulations! You have just come to the end of working your way through a heap of information about Milton Bible Church. We hope this information is helpful and trust you'll feel free to approach any elder with your questions or comments.

We invite you to continue to discover more about our church and about having a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

At least for now you should have a good understanding of where we're going, how we're going to get there, and who's coming with us. *We hope you'll join us for the journey!*

Milton Bible Church
Making Disciples – Transforming Lives

Sunday Services:

In-Person 10AM @ the Connect Centre

On-Line at 1:00PM @ www.miltonmiblechurch.ca

Address:

121 Chisholm Drive
Milton, ON L9T 4A6

Phone: 905-876-3586

Web Site: www.miltonbiblechurch.ca

E-Mail: info@miltonbiblechurch.com