

TAKING GROUND



CORE COMMITMENTS



a family together!

We have expressed our core commitments in a 3 staged model, successively setting out our place in God's wider evangelical family, within the charismatic family and our distinctive flavour as a Sphere within the Salt and Light family.

Those who lead our family of churches within Taking Ground have certain beliefs, values and commitments. This is how we want to live together in our part of the family of God. As leaders we will live according to these core commitments.

We will preach and teach these commitments in our churches, at our events, in our training. These are commitments we will constantly call our churches up to.

MARTIN DUNKLEY

APOSTOLIC TEAM LEADER

1 | we are evangelicals!

This implies a commitment to certain beliefs as set out, for example, in the Evangelical Alliance (UK) Basis of Faith (www.eauk.org/about/basis-of-faith.cfm) and shared by the vast majority of Evangelicals worldwide:

	We believe in...	References and comments
a	The one true God who lives eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.	Deu 6:4; Gen 1:1; Isa 40:28; Joh 1:3; 4:24; Col 1:16; 1Ti 2:5
b	The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.	Gen 1:2; 2:7; Psa 103:1-22, 104:30; Job 34:14-15
c	The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God – fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.	2Pe 1:21; Mat 5:18; 2Ti 3:16; Tit 1:2; 1Th 2:13; Jer 1:9; Pro 30:56; 2Sa 23:2; Mar 12:30; Act 4:25; Rev 22:18-19
d	The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.	Gen 1:26; 2:7,16-17; Mat 19:4; Col 1:16; 1Ti 2:13-14; Gen 3:1-24; 1Ti 2:13-14; Eph 2:3; Psa 58:3; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:10-23; Isa 64:6
e	The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.	Isa 9:6; Mat 1:18-25; Luk 1:26-37; Joh 1:1-14; Rev 19:13; 1Ti 3:16; 1Jo 5:7; Isa 7:14
f	The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.	Rom 6:23; 2:23-25; 8:34; 1Jo 3:4; Isa 53:4-8,10; Eze 18:20; Lev 17:11; Heb 7:25; 9,11-28; 10:1-18; 1Pe 1:18-19; 2:24; 1Co 15:38; Luk 24:51; Act 1:10-11; Col 1:27; 2Co 13:5
g	The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.	Mat 28:1-10; Joh 20:1-9; Act 1:1-10; 1Co 15
h	The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.	Rom 3:21-31; 4; 5:1-5
i	The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.	Joh 3:5; 6:44; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:6-11; Act 1:8; 5:34; 1Co 2:11-14; 12:13; Rom 6:9-11, 8:1-39; 1Jo 5:7
j	The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers – given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.	Eph 3:10-11; 4:11-13; Rom 12:3-8; Joh 12:44; Luk 10:16; Mat 5:13-14; Mar 16:20; 2Ti 2:12; 2Pe 2:1-3
k	The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.	1Th 4:13-18; Joh 14:1-3; Zec 14:1-9; Act 1:10-11; Luk 11:39; Rev 20:6; 1Co 15:51-2

1 | evangelicals

We are part of the worldwide evangelical church.

2 | charismatics

We are part of the charismatic church movement.

3 | taking ground

Our atmosphere and flavour as a family of churches.

2 | we are charismatics!

We recognise that these convictions characterise very many Christian people in all sorts of networks, denominations and configurations. While not specific to Taking Ground, we are very committed to:

		References and comments
a	Living in the Spirit We believe that the life of God comes to us through the Holy Spirit. We want to experience God's manifest presence as we worship and pray in the Holy Spirit. We see the Holy Spirit's ministry and gifts in the life of the believer and the church as a key to holiness, fruitfulness and effective mission, as every member is thoroughly filled with the Spirit, walks in step with the Spirit, and flows in the anointing and ministry of the Spirit.	Joh 1:33; 4:23-4; 7:37-39; Eph 5:18-20; Gal 5:16-26; Rom 8:5-17
b	Building the church We believe that God plans to change the world through His church, the Body of Christ. We therefore want to see relationship at the heart of how we are called to build together; celebration of believers' baptism and breaking of bread at the centre of our fellowship, the release of 'every-member ministry', Ephesians 4 ministries as keys to God's mission; and church-planting as a call of God in expanding His kingdom.	Eph 3:1-10; 4:1-16; Phi 2:12-16; Rom 6:3-5; 1Co 11:17-34; 12
c	Seeking the Kingdom Christ's primary call on our lives is to be a people who are centred on Him and seeking His Kingdom. We therefore are determined to seek God's Kingdom 24/7, in our families, at work, in leisure, and in the family of the church. We want to keep being transformed to be like the King. We want to preach, live and demonstrate the gospel of the Kingdom, attending to issues of injustice, poverty and bondage in society.	Mat 6:33; 16:19; Act 8:12; 19:8; 28:23
d	Focusing on mission We believe that God is on a mission to demonstrate his love to His world, to redeem the world from its sin, and to gather a huge family to himself from across the nations. As God's people, we must be on the same mission. Therefore we want to be proclaiming the Good News; demonstrating the Good News in every aspect of culture and society; seeing lives transformed by the power of Jesus; living the Good News; serving God in whatever nations of the world he leads us to.	2Co 5:11-21; Eph 4:17-6:9; Rom 15:23-33

3 | we are taking ground

Some of the more distinctive commitments that characterise our Apostolic Sphere:

a. Relationship The Bible teaches that every aspect of life in the Body of Christ is relational, we are a family not an organisation. Because of this, brother/sister relationships, pastor/disciple relationships and small group relationships are key for leaders, local churches and the life of the Taking Ground sphere.	Eph 4:16 & 32, Col 3:12-17, Gal 6:10, Heb 2:11
b. The place of Scripture Since we hold to the traditional evangelical view of, and approach to, the Scriptures and see them as the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and conduct, these Scriptures define all aspects of our church practice and culture. They define what is right and wrong and what is acceptable and unacceptable within the life of our churches. Within that scriptural framework we delight in a variety of styles within our churches. Whilst cultural trends are attempting to redefine and reinterpret the scriptures we remain very firmly committed to the traditional evangelical view and approach to God's word.	2 Peter 1:19-21, Matt 5:18, 2 Tim 3:14-17, 1 Thess 2:13, Prov 30:5-6, Psalm 119:103-105, Acts 4:25-26, 2 Peter 3:16, Matt 22:29, Luke 24:32, Luke 24:44-45, Rev 22:18-19
c. Discipleship Discipleship is a key to growing all of God's people into maturity, so that each one can live in obedience to Christ and play their full part in the purposes of God's Kingdom. We strongly encourage the development of discipling relationships, where personal pastoring and mentoring are key.	Mark 1:16-20, Matt 16:24-26, John 8:31-32, John 14:23-24, Matt 28:16-20
d. Holiness and Purity Those who desire and profess to follow Christ will seek to live lives according to God's standards and values, as expressed in Scripture. God's church should endeavour in all its attitudes, behaviours and practices to reflect God's holiness in every area of life and to enjoy the fruitful life it brings. In a culture of increasing sexual promiscuity and redefinition of what is acceptable, God's people should draw their values and definitions from the traditional evangelical view of scripture. They should seek to live in sexual purity with an understanding that the only place for a sexual relationship is within the context of marriage as defined in Scripture.	John 8:31-32, Luke 11:28, John 8:51, Prov 3:6, 1 John 2:5, John 14:23-24, 1 Peter 1:15-16, 2 Peter 3:11, 1 Cor 6:9-10, Matt 7:21-23, 1 Cor 6:18-20, Rom 1:18-32, Eph 5:8-11, Heb 13:4
e. Marriage and Family Marriage is the God-given gift of relationship between one man and one woman for life. In line with scripture a husband and wife should seek to reflect the loving relationship between Christ and his church, as husbands exercise sacrificial servant leadership and wives embrace the life giving power of godly submission. Fatherhood and motherhood are key in building strong healthy families naturally and spiritually. Godly family life is based on biblical principles and creates a place of care, encouragement, discipline and belonging. Within healthy church family the special place of singleness and the unique opportunities it affords are highly valued.	Gen 2:20-25, Matt 19:4-6, Eph 5:22-33, Col 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Cor 11:3, Eph 3:14-15, Phil 2:19-24, 1 Cor 4:14-17, Heb 2:11, Gal 6:10, 1 Cor 7:29-35, Prov 3:12, Heb 12:4-11
f. Leadership and Eldership Anointed servant leadership, God's gift to the church, involves both men and women working alongside one another in full partnership. Women taking significant roles of leadership and responsibility within our churches is a value and practice we actively promote. The family of God works best when spiritual fathers and mothers co-work alongside one another. Within that framework our biblical understanding and model of practice across our churches is that ultimate responsibility and accountability for leading local church family lies with male elders (spiritual fathers). These are men called by God, recognised and set in place through apostolic ministry, and received by the church. Understanding and receiving the spiritual authority of anointed leadership allows us to live under its blessing.	Phil 2:5-11, John 13:1-17 (the model of Jesus) Gen 1:28-29, 1 Cor 4:14-17, Phil 2:19-24, Tit 1:5, 1 Tim 3:1-13, Tit 1:6-9, Heb 13:7, 17
g. The Apostolic gift Taking Ground is an apostolic family with an apostolic vision. Receiving and honouring the authority and gifting of the apostle into our eldership teams and local church is an essential expression of what it means to be a part of our apostolic family. This gift brings increased vision and spiritual impact, helps ensure good foundations are laid and provides care, counsel and accountability for local church leaders. It is also a crucial gift in helping to identify and appoint new elders.	Eph 4:11-16, Eph 2:19-22, 1 Cor 4
h. Ephesians 4 Ministries Alongside the apostle, the prophet, pastor, evangelist and teacher are also key gifts in oversight and care, in laying foundations and in equipping the church for its works of service. Receiving Ephesians 4 ministries is one of the key ways we experience connection, strengthening and encouragement within the Taking Ground family.	Eph 4:11-16, Eph 2:19-22
i. Giving and Generosity Generous living and giving is a key to individuals and communities enjoying the blessing of God. Tithing is a starting point for giving, but generosity will take us far beyond that. We encourage the practice of tithing to the local church of which we are a part and where we are fed and cared for spiritually. We also encourage the regular financial support of apostolic ministries that provide ongoing oversight, care and support of local churches and the financial honouring of the other Ephesians 4 ministries that from time to time visit and serve our local churches.	Gen 14:18-20, Gen 28:20-22, Mal 3:6-12, Luke 11:42, 2 Cor 8-9, Matt 6:24
j. Wider Relationships Churches that are part of Taking Ground carry many common values and practices, however we also look to maintain a sense of honour and respect for those parts of the wider body of Christ that are not identical to ours. We believe healthy churches relate to, work with and receive from other churches, streams and denominations - this is therefore a practice we strongly encourage.	Eph 4:16