

# OUR SHARED VALUES

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**JEFF PURSWELL**

*Editors' note: When we formulated our revised polity in 2013, Sovereign Grace Churches identified seven key convictions that would characterize our churches, define who we are for the benefit of others, and bring unity to life, ministry, and mission as churches. The following description of these values comes from our website: [sovereigngrace.com](http://sovereigngrace.com).*

Our churches embrace the following seven convictions. We believe they are a faithful application of our biblical values and shape our local practices and ministries regardless of our context. They define what it means to be a Sovereign Grace church.

## **1. Reformed Theology**

Scripture presents the all-glorious, triune God as the source and end of all things (Rom. 11:36), sovereignly working all things according to His will (Eph. 1:11). At the center of God's purposes in the world is the exaltation of His glory through the redemption of sinners (John 17:1–26). To this end, we believe that God sovereignly chooses men and women to be saved in order to display His immeasurable grace and glory (Eph. 1:3–6; Rom. 9:11). God's sovereign grace in salvation humbles us, fills us with gratitude, and compels us to worship Him and share the message of His grace to all people.

## **2. Gospel-Centered Doctrine & Preaching**

We believe that the gospel—the good news of God's saving activity in Jesus Christ—is the pinnacle of His redemptive acts (Eph. 1:9–12), the center of the Bible's story (Luke 24:44–47), and the essential message for our faith, life, and witness (1 Cor. 15:3–11). We are committed to preaching the gospel, singing the gospel, praying the gospel, and building our churches upon the gospel (2 Tim. 4:2; Col. 3:16; Matt. 16:18). Our ultimate hope in all that we do is not our plans and labors but the perfect life, substitutionary death, victorious resurrection, and glorious ascension of Jesus Christ.

## **3. Continuationist Pneumatology**

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God's purpose to dwell among His people entered a new era (Ex. 33:14–16; Lev. 26:12; John 14:16–17; Acts 2:14–21). We believe the Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with increased power for Christian life and witness, including the giving of His supernatural gifts for the building up of the church and for various works of ministry in the world (Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:16–18; 1 Cor. 12:4–7).

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We are eager to pursue God's active presence in all its breadth so that Christ may be magnified in our lives, in the church, and among the nations (Ps. 105:4; 1 Cor. 14:1; Eph. 2:22).

## **4. Complementarian Leadership in the Home and in the Church**

We believe it was God's glorious plan to create men and women in His image, giving them equal dignity and value in His sight while appointing differing and complementary roles for them within the home and the church (Gen. 1:26–28; Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Tim. 2:8–15). Because these roles give different expressions to God's image in humanity, they should be valued and pursued in joy and faith. As the redeemed community of God, the church has a unique opportunity and responsibility to celebrate this complementarity, contend for it against cultural hostility, and protect it from sinful distortions.

## 5. Elder-Governed and Elder-Led Churches

Jesus Christ reigns as head over his church, and he gives to his church elders (or pastors) to govern and lead local churches under His authority (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:11; Titus 1:5). We believe that men, qualified by both character and gifting, are to serve as elders, shepherding God's people as under-shepherds of Christ (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:1–7; 1 Pet. 5:1–3). To a great degree, a church's health depends on its elders' health, so we aim to strengthen the current elders in our churches while identifying and training new ones (Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 2:2).

## 6. Church Planting, Outreach, and Global Mission

Our gospel-centrality entails not only treasuring the gospel personally but sharing it passionately. The risen Christ commissioned His church to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18–20). We believe that commission falls to us and all believers and is fulfilled primarily through church planting, whereby the gospel is proclaimed, and converts are formed into communities of disciples (Acts 2:21–47; 14:23). We are eager to pursue this mission, relying fully on the Holy Spirit, to see the gospel proclaimed and churches planted throughout the world so that God may be glorified among every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 7:9–12).

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## 7. United in Fellowship, Mission, and Governance

We believe that the unity for which Jesus prayed among His people should find concrete expression among believers and churches. Indeed, the New Testament testifies to a vibrant interdependence among churches in the first century (John 17:20–21; Acts 16:4–5; 1 Cor. 11:16; Gal. 2:7–10).

We seek to express a similar interdependence through our common fellowship, mission, and governance. Our fellowship extends beyond mere denominational affiliation; we are committed to applying the gospel together in relationships that foster mutual encouragement, care, and a glad pursuit of Christlikeness. Our shared governance and mission protect our

churches doctrinally and ethically, enabling our individual churches to do more together than we could ever do separately.

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