

# GROWTH TRACK

CELEBRATION  
CHURCH TORONTO

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CHURCH TORONTO

## STEP 1

B E L I E V E



**BELIEVE**

**BELONG**

**BECOME**

**BUILD**



# WELCOME HOME

Our prayer for you is to:

## 1. BELIEVE

Have a relationship with Jesus.

## 2. BELONG

Find your place in community through Small Groups.

## 3. BECOME

Discover your God-designed purpose through Growth Track.

## 4. BUILD

Get on team to start building God's house.

Over the next 4 weeks, we'll be going over these objectives. We're committed to seeing you live your fullest, best life that God has created you uniquely for.

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# BELIEVE

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

### WHO IS GOD? 11

- REVELATION OF GOD
- THE NATURE OF GOD
- CHARACTER
- RELATIONSHIPS

### SALVATION 14

### WORSHIP 15

### PRIVATE DEVOTION 17

- THE BIBLE
- PRAYER
- BAPTISM

### THE CHURCH 21

### OUR CHURCH 22

### OUR LEADERSHIP 27

### OUR GIVING 30

### NOTES 31

# WHO IS GOD?

## REVELATION OF GOD

What we know about God comes from Scripture. Scripture is God breathed. Instead of us forming an outside opinion of what God could or should be, the Scriptures are God's full revelation on who He is, the way He thinks about us, and His plans for us - particularly through the life and words of Jesus, and the writings of the Apostle Paul.

The Bible opens by informing us of who God is in Genesis 1:1, saying, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." John 1:3 explains, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." God is the Creator of all things, pre-existing in eternal power, having created "all things through Him and for Him." Everything was created by God and belongs to Him.

## THE NATURE OF GOD

Some people wonder if God is a mind or an energy or some predetermination material force. The Bible clearly teaches that God possesses a will<sup>1</sup>, and from that will He acts and creates<sup>2</sup> and interacts with His creation. Jesus said that "God is spirit"<sup>3</sup> - so when we think of God's essential nature, we must understand Him firstly as Spiritual. Jesus was responding to a woman in Samaria that believed that location was important for worshipping God. Jesus explained that God is not confined to physical location, and those that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 1:11

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 4:11

<sup>3</sup> John 4:24

There is no place where God is not<sup>4</sup> and He cannot be contained by anything in the universe<sup>5</sup>. God's essential nature is also invisible, related to God's spirituality. What it meant by invisibility is that God's spiritual nature will never be able to be fully understood by us, even though God reveals Himself to us through visible, created things. In the same breath that John recounts beholding God in the person and work of Jesus, he also says, "No one has seen God."<sup>6</sup> Paul writes, "To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God..."<sup>7</sup>

So while Jesus is absolutely the "image of the invisible God"<sup>8</sup> and "the exact representation of his nature,"<sup>9</sup> and "whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father,"<sup>10</sup> we will never totally understand God. His ways are "unsearchable."<sup>11</sup> The Scriptures also teach that God is All-Knowing,<sup>12</sup> All Powerful,<sup>13</sup> Pre-existing,<sup>14</sup> Three In One as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,<sup>15</sup> and Eternal.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 139:7-10

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings 8:27

<sup>6</sup> John 1:18

<sup>7</sup> 1 Timothy 1:17

<sup>8</sup> Colossians 1:15

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 1:3

<sup>10</sup> John 6:46

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 145:3

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 139:4, 16; Matthew 6:8, 10:30

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 1; Revelation 19:60

<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 1

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17

## WHO IS GOD?

### CHARACTER

The Bible teaches that God is All-Truthful,<sup>17</sup> Good,<sup>18</sup> Love,<sup>19</sup> Merciful, Gracious, and Patient,<sup>20</sup> Holy<sup>21</sup> and Righteous,<sup>22</sup> despising and hating oppression, evil and sin<sup>23</sup> because of the harm it causes His people.

### RELATIONSHIPS

God loves the world, and so He sent His Son<sup>24</sup> in order to commence His ultimate plan of renewal and restoration. Jesus is the Son sent into the world<sup>25</sup> to become the Mediator between God and man,<sup>26</sup> and in Him we have been reconciled to God.<sup>27</sup> God gives His Holy Spirit to indwell those that have received the work of Christ<sup>28</sup>; the Spirit leads us into further relationship with the Father<sup>29</sup> and empowers us to live for God.<sup>30</sup>

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. 29 Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. 30 Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” | MATTHEW 11:28-30 MSG*

<sup>17</sup> John 17:3; 1 John 5:20

<sup>18</sup> Luke 18:19; Psalm 34:8, 100:5; Romans 8:28

<sup>19</sup> 1 John 4:8

<sup>20</sup> Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8; Romans 3:23-24

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 71:22; 1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14

<sup>22</sup> Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 45:19; Romans 3:25-26

<sup>23</sup> Romans 1:18, 2:5, 5:9, 9:22; Colossians 3:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 2:16, 5:9; Hebrews 3:11

<sup>24</sup> John 3:16

<sup>25</sup> John 1:14, 14:6

<sup>26</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5

<sup>27</sup> Ephesians 1:6

<sup>28</sup> Ephesians 1:13-14

<sup>29</sup> Romans 8:26-27

<sup>30</sup> Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:14

## SALVATION

Often we disqualify ourselves from God's love because of our history, our failures and shortcomings. Sin has caused us to miss the mark of God's love. No amount of self-improvement or good works can ever make up for God's love. His love can only be freely received through His grace and forgiveness. So how can we accept what we have not earned? The Bible says that nothing in all of creation can separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And to accept God's love is to trust His patient, forgiving and gracious stance towards us. Only Jesus has the power to free us from guilt, shame and condemnation to give us a life of wholeness. All we have to do is turn to Him.

To be made whole, or to be saved is to acknowledge our need of a Savior. It is to accept His free gift of New Life in Christ. It is to change our mind, to repent, forsaking a self-dependent life, and submitting to His unearned grace and forgiveness in Christ. Romans 10:9 says that ***"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."***

Salvation is God's free gift to us and we become His children.

It is an irrevocable acceptance into the family of God and it is an empowerment to live life wholly and fully with the purpose of reflecting God to the rest of His creation.

## WORSHIP

Who God brings out of captivity, God brings into freedom; who God brings out of the world, He brings into the Church; who God is saving, God is adding.<sup>31</sup> We are put into the family of God,<sup>32</sup> planted in the House of God,<sup>33</sup> so that we can worship the God who called us out of darkness and into light.<sup>34</sup>

Understanding the corporate nature of our calling and saving is a precursor to worship. The story of God's salvation of a people begins in Exodus 7:16, where God demands of Pharaoh, "Let my people go, so that they may worship me..." We are set free to worship - we are saved for worship. Worship, then, isn't just a gathering or one-off service, but a life. Romans 12:1-2 suggests that giving God our lives is a part of this worship. But we can only present our lives to God if we remember that we don't belong to ourselves, that our lives are not our own.<sup>35</sup> We were "bought with a price," the precious blood of Jesus set us free. And now that we are free, we are free to worship God. Once we were slaves to sin and fear, but now we have been set free from sin and fear, and we can come boldly before the throne of grace,<sup>36</sup> ministering to God and receiving from Him as well.

In the light of our deliverance, we have that revelation of who God is: He is the all-powerful, merciful, saving, loving, good God. He is worthy of our praise. He deserves our songs, our adoration, and our highest affection.<sup>37</sup> God deserves our most extravagant worship: He has held nothing back from us, but has sent His Son into the world, who bore our sins on the cross; He has given us His Spirit, has

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<sup>31</sup> Acts 2:47

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 68:6

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 92:13

<sup>34</sup> 1 Peter 2:9

<sup>35</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:20

<sup>36</sup> Hebrews 4:16

<sup>37</sup> Revelation 4:11

adopted us into His family, and has welcomed us home as His sons and daughters.

Worship is the greatest expression of our thankfulness and gratitude and wonder. The book of Hebrews calls this thanksgiving a “sacrifice of praise.”<sup>38</sup>

We allow God to release His power towards us and against His enemies as we worship in “spirit and truth.” In 2 Chronicles 20:21-22, the nation of Judah was outnumbered and surrounded by an innumerable army of Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians. King Jehoshaphat led the army of Israel out with the singers first, who praised God. The passage reads, “When they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were defeated.”

The worship of God the Father, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, is the first and highest call of the Church.

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<sup>38</sup> Hebrews 13:15

## PRIVATE DEVOTION

The Bible is the primary way that we can know God, understand His thoughts toward us, and be renewed in our mind.<sup>39</sup> We can be renewed daily in our mind<sup>40</sup> by God's Word and Spirit. We need the revelation that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.<sup>41</sup> God has something fresh for us every day, and He desires a relationship with us that isn't stagnant, but vibrant.

Private devotion is the opportunity to hear from God - to get one of those innumerable "God thoughts" available to us<sup>42</sup> - through worship and the Word.

### THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word and makes incredible claims about itself that no other book does.

*"All Scripture is breathed out by God, and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness." | 2 TIMOTHY 3:16*  
**ESV**

*"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." | ROMANS 15:4* **ESV**

*"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." |*  
**HEBREWS 4:12** **ESV**

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<sup>39</sup> Ephesians 5:26

<sup>40</sup> Ephesians 4:22-25

<sup>41</sup> Luke 4:4

<sup>42</sup> Psalm 139

Jesus Himself quoted the Old Testament authoritatively, and used it to counterattack the devil when he was being tempted. Adam and Eve's mistake was to not trust the Word of God. Jesus teaches us that trusting God's Word is the only way to live. We believe that Jesus and His Words cannot be separated. So then, the Bible becomes a powerful way of experiencing Jesus today as we rehearse His words and allow them to shape our thoughts and feelings towards God, ourselves, and others

### **3 THINGS TO DO WITH THE BIBLE**

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## PRAYER

While prayer is simply talking to God, God has a way that He wants us to think of Him, approach Him, and grow in our understanding of our relationship to Him. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, and Jesus responded with what we often call The Lord's Prayer.<sup>43</sup>

*"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." | MATTHEW 6:9-13 NIV*

The Lord's Prayer teaches us that Jesus is the way to the Father; it teaches us that God is a Father; it teaches us that we need to understand God's will, trust God's will and believe for God's will above our will; it teaches us that God has a Kingdom, and that His Kingdom rule and reign must be released on earth; it teaches us that God cares about our daily needs, and that our needs are collective as well as individual, and to be dependent on the Father for provision.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us that God can lead us and guide us, and that He can deliver us from the power of evil at work in the world.

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<sup>43</sup> Matthew 6:5-14

## BAPTISM

Jesus was baptized, His disciples were baptized, and He commanded<sup>44</sup> - not a suggestion or option, the Greek word reads “command” - His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

If you have recently decided to follow Jesus, water baptism is the next step in your faith journey. As an outward declaration of the decision you have made to surrender your heart to Jesus, it’s a significant moment that will serve as a reminder that the old is gone. God has saved you and will be faithful to continue what He has started in your life.<sup>45</sup>

As a church, it would be our privilege to host you and your friends and family as you take this important step. For more information, dates, and locations, or to sign up to be baptized, talk with your Growth Track Host.

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<sup>44</sup> Matthew 28:18-20

<sup>45</sup> Philippians 1:6

## THE CHURCH

Jesus defines The Church in two ways: as all believers of all time periods, of all ages in Christ,<sup>46</sup> and as local congregations of believers.<sup>47</sup> Out of 114 references in the New Testament, 95 of them refer to the Local Church.

We believe that the local church is the hope of the world because:

*Jesus is building it* | **MATTHEW 16:18-19**

*It glorifies Jesus* | **EPHESIANS 3:20-21**

*It is submitted to Jesus and His Word* | **EPHESIANS 5:22-23**

*Jesus died for the Church* | **EPHESIANS 5:25**

*When God saves, He adds who He is saving to the Church* | **ACTS 2:47**

*The local church is the family of God* | **EPHESIANS 3:14-15**

*The local church is a place where we can flourish and grow in our faith* | **PSALM 92:13**

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<sup>46</sup> Matthew 16:13-19

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 18:15-20

## OUR CHURCH

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to use  
**every opportunity,**  
in **every possible place,**  
with **every possible method,**  
to reach **every possible person,**  
with the **Good News of Jesus Christ.**

## OUR CHURCH

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION CHURCH

### VISION STATEMENT

1. To reveal the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ for all people.
2. To provide a family environment where everyone can find a place of belonging.
3. To encourage growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ so that believers can enjoy successful lives.
4. To send equipped believers into purposeful service for God in all areas of society and into all the world.

## HISTORY

The Toronto International Celebration Church (TICC) was launched the second Sunday of September, 2000. For two years prior, the Lord had been speaking to Pastor Peter Youngren again and again about launching a church in Toronto. Already that first Sunday there was a sense of the prophetic fulfillment of a church birthed by a word from God.

For the first four years, services were held at the Korean Garden Church, until the end of 2004, when the current facilities at 190 Railside were opened. From the beginning, the church has been established on the revelation of the grace of Jesus Christ, and each individual member is encouraged to discover and pursue the gifts that God has placed in them.

The word “international” has always been significant to TICC. During any service you will notice people from all around the world who come together in a common cause of growing in the knowledge of Jesus, and sharing His love with others.

The Toronto Celebration Church is a non-denominational church.

## STATEMENT OF BELIEF

We believe...

...in one God, revealed in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

...that the Bible is God's inspired Word; it is our guide, and the supreme revelation of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

...that Jesus Christ is both God and Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, led a sin-less life, took all our sins upon Himself, died and rose again. Today, He is seated at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest and Mediator.

... that sin has darkened the minds of all people so that they cannot see God, but that Christ came in order that people's inward eyes would be opened to see who God is and what God has done through Jesus Christ.

...that salvation is a gift freely given to all, who repent (change one's mind) from self-effort works that do not produce righteousness and come to God, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is a new life in Christ and this life produces works pleasing to God.

...that water baptism is a declaration of the cleansing power of God and a testimony of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

...that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter, who brings to our remembrance who Christ is and what Christ has done. He also blesses us with spiritual gifts and empowers us to yield the fruit of the Spirit.

...that the Holy Communion is a celebration of Jesus' death, and our remembrance of Him.

...that Christ's death, resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father constitutes finished work of Christ, whereby all believers receive abundant and eternal life.

...that believers are called to preach the gospel of Christ, the word of reconciliation, to all nations, and that this is the supreme task of the church.

...in the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment by Jesus Christ according to the gospel.

## OUR LEADERSHIP

### FOUNDING PASTOR



Peter Youngren is the Founder of Toronto International Celebration Church and World Impact Ministries, an international Christian organization with outreaches in more than 100 nations.

His philosophy of ministry emphasizes the grace of God towards all people regardless of religion or culture. Youngren's international events are called Friendship Festivals, with attendances normally ranging from 10,000 up to 600,000 in a single service. Since 1990 over 345,000 pastors and leaders have been trained through Youngren's Leadership Seminars.

In recognition of his success in Gospel ministry in non-Christian nations, Ministry Today listed Youngren as one of the most influential international evangelist of the 20th century. Youngren studied at Zion Bible College, Rhode Island, USA, and launched his Gospel ministry immediately after. He became an ordained Christian Minister in 1982.

In 2001 he obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy in Biblical studies from Florida Christian University, followed by an Honorary Degree of Christian Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration in 2002.

Youngren began broadcasting on television in 1985. From 2009 until 2013, he established Grace TV as Canada's largest 24/7 Christian television channel. Currently his You Are Loved telecast is aired throughout the week across United States, Canada and the Middle East.

Youngren is the Founding Pastor of the Toronto International Celebration Church and the Niagara Celebration Church, which during his time as Senior Pastor was listed by Faith Today as one of Canada's top mega churches. In 1994 he founded Open Bible Faith Fellowship, which reached a membership of 450 clergy and 98 affiliated churches and organizations under his leadership.

World Impact Bible Institute was established in 1988 in Canada, and has more than 3,300 graduates. Today affiliate schools are in Nairobi, Kenya and Medan, Indonesia. In 2005 Youngren founded a special Israel and the Middle East ministry, Way of Peace.

He is the author of 8 books and numerous study manuals. His production is available through Graceworld Ministries.

Youngren is married to Taina, and they work together in the ministry.

## **LEAD PASTOR**

Nathan Thurber is the Lead Pastor of TICC, along with his wife, Megen.

Nathan was appointed Lead Pastor in 2013. He has worked with the ministry of Peter Youngren since 1999, after graduating World Impact Bible Institute.

Before becoming Lead Pastor of TICC, he travelled with Peter Youngren's overseas missions ministry, and oversaw the operations of Grace TV.

## OUR GIVING

We are a church that encourages giving as part of our worship. Giving the “tithe”<sup>48</sup> is giving the first tenth of our income. An “offering” is anything we give in addition to the tithe.

### WHY TITHE?

- Tithing reminds me that everything I have was given to me by God.

*“Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the ability to produce wealth.” | DEUTERONOMY 8:18 NET*

- Tithing expresses my love to the Lord.

*“Each of you should bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.” | DEUTERONOMY 16:17 NIV*

- Tithing gives God a chance to prove He exists and wants to bless you.<sup>49</sup>

*“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” | MALACHI 3:10 NIV*

- Bring your tithe to the church you call HOME.

*“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.” | MALACHI 3:10 NIV*

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<sup>48</sup> “Tithe” means “a tenth part.”

<sup>49</sup> Ephesians 3:20

## NOTES

### CONNECT WITH US

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