

Doctrinal Clarity for Missional Partnership

Articulating a biblical framework for effective missional partnership through theological precision and practical wisdom.



The Greater Mavuno Baptist Partnership

Greater Mavuno District is a rapidly growing region in East Africa marked by vibrant church planting, increasing Baptist identity, and growing theological confusion. Three Baptist churches desire to work together to reach 18 unreached villages near the mountains.



Grace Baptist Church

Confessionally Baptist and Scripture-centered with strong emphasis on expositional preaching, discipleship, and the sufficiency of Scripture.



Kingdom Increase Baptist

Self-identified Baptist but strongly influenced by prosperity theology, teaching guaranteed material blessing through faithfulness and giving.



New Life Community Baptist

Baptist in name and practice, emphasizing evangelism and community impact while strongly promoting local church autonomy.

Doctrinal Clarity is Targeted for Faithful Partnership

Missional partnership without doctrinal clarity is building on sand. It may seem efficient in the short term, but it inevitably leads to confusion, conflict, and compromise.

Mission Flows from Message

What we do in partnership is inseparable from what we believe about God, the gospel, humanity, and salvation.

Compromise Leads to Conflict

When we partner with those who teach error, we endorse it with our presence, resources, and reputation. Partnership implies endorsement.

Certainty Prevents Confusion

Unclear partnerships confuse the watching world. When we partner with those who deny essential truths, we demonstrate that truth doesn't matter.

Theology Shapes Trajectory

The people you collaborate with in ministry influence your direction, methods, and message over time.

Why Doctrinal Clarity Matters

Doctrinal clarity isn't about being picky or divisive. It's about being clear for the sake of faithful ministry and gospel integrity.

01

Representation Fidelity

We must represent Him accurately

02

Gospel Integrity

A confused gospel is no gospel at all

03

Church Verity

False teaching destroys from within believer

04

Witness Clarity

Mixed messages confuse seekers

05

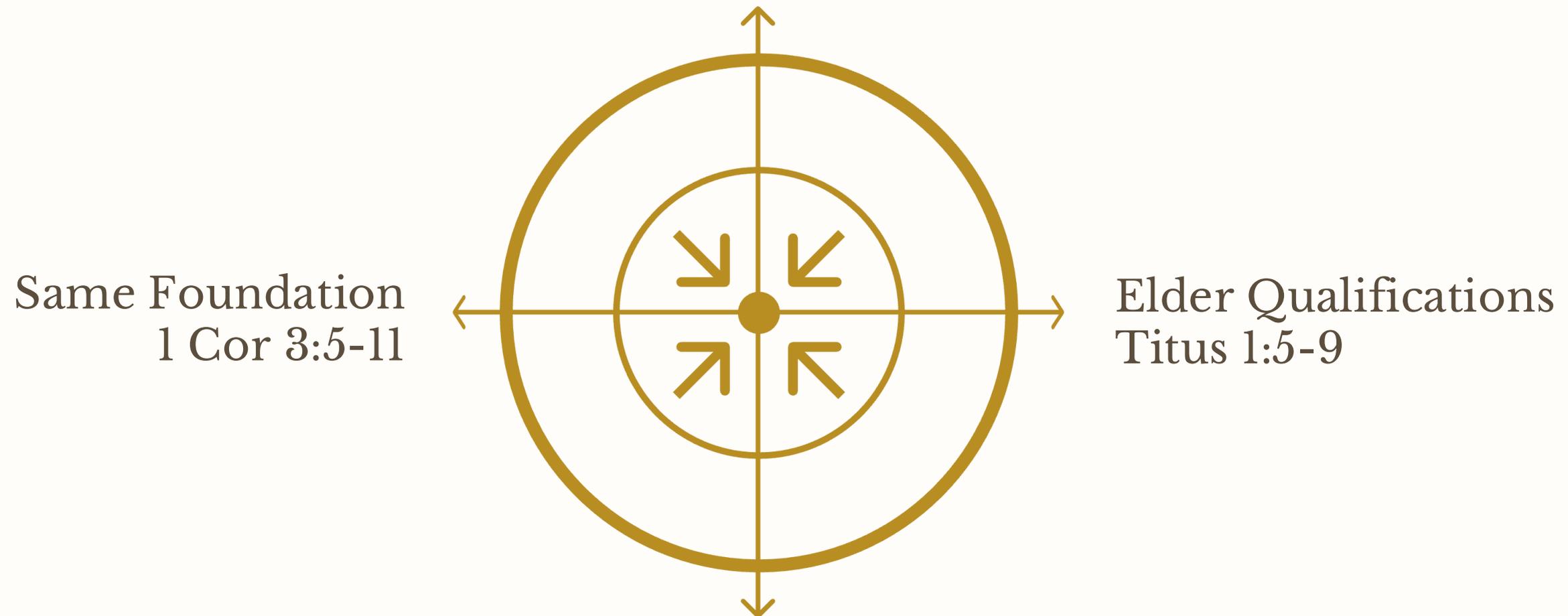
Partnership Longevity

Clarity prevents future division

Doctrinal Clarity is Theologically Stipulated

Scripture provides clear guidance on the necessity of doctrinal clarity for effective partnership in gospel ministry.

Unity in Truth (John 17:21-23)



Theological Examination (Acts 13-15)

These biblical passages establish that unity must be rooted in truth, leadership must guard doctrine, partnerships require examination, and all ministry must build on the same gospel foundation.



SCRIPTURE

The Unity Jesus Desires

John 17:20-23

Jesus prays for unity in truth—unity among those who believe the message His apostles taught.

This isn't organizational uniformity or doctrinal minimalism, but a shared allegiance to the truth about Christ that the apostles proclaimed. This unity has a missional purpose—it displays the reality of God's love and Christ's mission to a watching world.

"For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." — **1 Corinthians 3:11**

Three Tiers of Doctrinal Partnership

Before entering partnership, we must examine our theological alignment across three critical tiers that determine the health and sustainability of our collaboration.



First-Tier: Essential

Do we share the same gospel?
These are non-negotiable, foundational truths about salvation, Christ, and Scripture.



Second-Tier: Important

Do we agree on matters that directly impact how we'll work together? Church governance, ordinances, and ministry practice.



Third-Tier: Tertiary

Can we allow liberty on matters that don't compromise our shared mission? Secondary issues where unity doesn't require uniformity.

Doctrinal Clarity is Tied to a Personal and Church-Level Commitment

Doctrinal clarity requires intentional commitment at both individual and congregational levels to ensure faithful partnership.

Personal Commitment

- Don't be casual about doctrine in your own partnerships
- Examine whether you share the same gospel foundation before pursuing ministry opportunities
- Don't avoid necessary conversations about theological differences because they feel uncomfortable
- Be willing to exit existing partnerships that have theologically blurred lines

Church-Level Commitment

- Develop a well-defined doctrinal statement covering Baptist distinctives, gospel clarity, Scripture authority, and church offices
- Elders must examine doctrinal commitments of organizations before recommending them
- Guest speakers and missionaries must go through theological vetting
- Missionary teams must agree and pledge to adhere to the doctrinal statement

A Well-defined and Pertinent Doctrinal Statement

The church must have a well-defined and pertinent doctrinal statement that must include the following points:

- What makes a Baptist a Baptist
- Belief in the True Gospel, is by faith through grace alone
- Authority of Scripture
- Believer's Baptism
- Priesthood of the believer
- 2 ordinances – of the church Baptism/Lord's supper
- Definition of the local church and therefore what autonomy means
- Agreement of the definition of the Trinity
- Biblical qualifications of the church leader—who does what?
- Clarification of Church Offices

Doctrinal Clarity is Tethered to Clear Processes

Ensuring Healthy Cooperation

Effective missional partnership requires documented processes and clear expectations established through a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding.

- The mission and vision pursued, by each entity and cooperatively, made clear from the beginning of the relationship
- Leadership roles and responsibilities
- Team roles and responsibilities
- Clear short term -5 year and longer-term goals—including targets/timelines/ benchmarks—for each organization and the collaboration
- Methodology— church planting/missions
- Stewardship of resources, money and human –How will we acquire and use the Lord’s money?
- Success in the cooperation is defined
- Establishment of clear communication cadence and path
- Debrief: evaluation of the cooperation after each step
- Accountability structures
- Conflict resolution
- The process of dealing with the disqualification of team members
- Team composition is sufficient to accomplish the task.

Mission &
Vision

Leadership
Structure

Goals &
Benchmarks

Methodology

Resource
Stewardship

Communication
& Conflict

Critical Requirement: A face-to-face meeting is necessary to ensure doctrinal agreement and alignment before partnership begins.

Doctrinal Clarity is Taught through Training

Sustainable missional partnership requires comprehensive training initiatives for both church members and missions team members to ensure theological alignment and cultural competence.



Cultural Context Training

Understanding local ministry context, cultural do's and don'ts for effective cross-cultural engagement



Church Planting Training

Robust, biblical training in church planting methodology and sustainable ministry development



Doctrinal Education

Training on the doctrinal statement, Baptist distinctives, and theological foundations



Evangelism & Discipleship

Practical training in gospel proclamation and making disciples who make disciples



Theological Educators

Developing leaders who can train others in sound doctrine and biblical ministry