

HARBOR  
NETWORK



# Anchor & Compass



**Anchor** (n): a device that serves to hold an object firmly; a mainstay. An anchor grounds.

**Compass** (n): an instrument for determining directions; the perimeter or scope. A compass guides.



# What is *Anchor & Compass?*

From the beginning of the network in 2011, our pastors and leaders have thoughtfully considered how to do holistic, gospel-centered ministry with both deep convictions and with innovation to reach a new generation of burned out, dechurched, agnostic, and atheistic image bearers in and around their communities.

Our pastors desire to lead their churches in both faithful and fruitful ministry, grounded in historical, biblical convictions, while also being guided by the Spirit. Our goal as a network is to guide these pastors and church leaders as they seek to launch, lead and multiply thriving churches, so that more people experience renewal through the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Lord does what only he can do, Harbor wants to do what we can to help advance his kingdom.

To that end, we are establishing a suite of core ministries to provide safety and support to pastors, expanding our financial resources to give more away, and building various ministry contexts both regionally and nationally so more leaders in more places can enjoy our support. But, we believe one additional piece is critical: a clear theological framework that serves as both an anchor to ground and a compass to guide our leaders towards launching, leading, and multiplying *thriving* churches.

This first edition of the Harbor Network *Anchor & Compass* is intended to introduce what will become a core curriculum and training available to every Harbor Network church.





# Our Anchor

## WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

Christians have long used confessional statements and creeds to summarize their core beliefs and to remain steadfast in the faith. As such, theological confessions are time-tested statements that unify Christians within a specific tradition, denomination, or network.

Harbor Network's theological **anchor** refers to the core beliefs that ground our faith, our ministry and our partnership as churches; it consists of our confessional statement and narrowing theological distinctives. This anchor provides stability when the storms of sin, Satan, and this broken world crash down around us, threatening to send us—and our churches—adrift.

The anchor grounds.

## Our Confessional Statement

Since 2011 we have utilized The Gospel Coalition's confessional statement as the foundational confession that all our churches

acknowledge as the minimum, top-tier doctrines our churches believe and embody.

This confessional statement places us inside the Protestant, reformed, orthodox, and evangelical space within broader Christendom.

Want to read the statement in its entirety?  
Scan the QR code on the right.



## Our Theological Distinctives

Additionally, partnership with Harbor requires churches to joyfully align with and embody three theological distinctives for the protection and enrichment of thriving churches.

### **Harbor churches are **reformational**.**

Our theology is rooted in the major tenets of the Protestant Reformation: that salvation comes to us only in God's Word (*sola scriptura*) by faith alone (*sola fide*) and grace alone (*sola gratia*) through Christ alone (*solus Christus*) and for God's glory alone (*soli Deo gloria*). This means our churches affirm the authority of God's Word, God's sovereignty in salvation, and the necessity of evangelism. We seek to exhibit deep trust in God's promises and providence, and be zealous in our evangelistic efforts and good works.

### **Harbor churches are **credo baptists**.**

Our churches see personal conversion as a necessity prior to administering baptism; our practice of believer's baptism is by immersion.

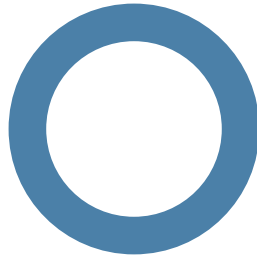
### **Harbor churches are **biblically led by elders and deacons**.**

Harbor churches believe that among the spiritual household



of the local church there are two divinely mandated offices: qualified servants (men and women) are entrusted with the responsibility to lead and steward ministries as deacons, and qualified men, joined in a plurality, are entrusted with the authority and responsibility to shepherd God's household as elders.





# Our Compass

## HOW DO WE PRACTICE WHAT WE BELIEVE?

The churches we've planted and "adopted" since 2011 have felt that many in North America do ministry disconnected from their confession and their culture. We want our pastors and leaders to be faithful and fruitful, equipped in understanding God's Word deeply and applying this knowledge to a particular people, place, and time in history.

To do this requires not just grounding core beliefs, but a theological vision for moving those beliefs into action in a particular time and place.<sup>1</sup>

Our leaders need a theological vision—one articulated in writing, easily understood, and practical—as they navigate the hard work of contextualizing innovative ministry expressions within their churches and communities. A theological vision acts as a guide for the church leader, which is why we want to not

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller, *Center Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 18. A theological vision is "a vision for what you are going to do with your doctrine in a particular time and place."

just articulate one for our network but also why we refer to it as *the compass*.

A compass is a tool used for navigation, orienting the user toward their desired direction. *The Compass* refers to our theological vision, the guiding values and principles that direct our church leaders towards launching, leading, and multiplying thriving churches.

Harbor's five core values outline who we are as a network and define what is important to us. As core values, they influence all our work, from how to accomplish our mission and pursue our vision, to how to program conferences and hire staff. Values ensure that all those within our organization are like-hearted, not just like-minded.

We believe these five values also characterize thriving churches and leaders, and the principles articulate practices to develop those values. These principles are meant to be aspirational and directional, rather than prescriptive. We believe each of these values is necessary for the thriving of the individual leader, the churches, and the network as a whole.

## Renewal-driven mission



Grounded in the gospel of Jesus and through the power of the Spirit, Harbor churches pursue personal, corporate, and cultural renewal as they advance the mission of God. In a time of disintegration and chaos, we believe in a renewal-driven mission. Harbor churches are gospel-centered, keeping the gospel message and its implications at the core of all of the church's ministries. A gospel-centered church experiences reconciliation vertically (conversion and personal renewal of relationships with God), horizontally (reconciliation of

relationships between believers and neighbors), and cosmically (social renewal and cultural change).<sup>2</sup>

In pursuit of a renewal-driven mission, Harbor churches...

- Prioritize fervent, prevailing prayer.
- Make the gospel central, clear, and compelling.
- Pursue justice and mercy.
- Depend on the continued and active work of the Holy Spirit for mission and ministry.
- Send Christians into the world to live, work, and minister faithfully as sent ones.
- Pursue both theological integration and disenculturation.
- Cultivate counter-cultural relationships.
- Actively plant and multiply churches.

## Conviction and Imagination



We root ourselves in the historic faith and imagine fresh expressions of the kingdom for our particular cultural moment. We value ministry expressions of conviction and imagination for a post-Christian world. We recognize that the use of imagination can seem to conflict with conviction, but we are convinced one needs the other. Imagination without conviction can lead to chaos and apostasy; however, conviction without imagination can lead to stagnancy.

In pursuit of conviction and imagination, Harbor churches...

- Appreciate and embody aspects of both institutions (structure, order, stability, budgets, policies, etc.) and movements (leading with vision, innovation, shared power, decentralized ministry, etc.).
- Are skillfully contextual in their local mission and ministry strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Jarvis J. Williams, *Redemptive Kingdom Diversity: A Biblical Theology of the People of God* (Baker Academic, 2021)

- Are filled with people who are curious, flexible, and eager to learn.
- Express truth through art, beauty, and creativity.
- Endure suffering and trials with resilience and patient hope.
- Seek to implement balanced, holistic ministry models.

## Diversity



We empower a diverse group of leaders from all people groups to plant churches in diverse areas because God values all people. We pursue diversity in a time of division. Harbor churches celebrate and enjoy diversity in at least four areas: (1) the people who lead and fill our churches; (2) the places in which God plants, grows, and multiplies our churches; (3) the practices and programs within our churches; (4) and the perspectives (e.g. political, educational, economic) of our leaders and their congregants.

In pursuit of diversity, Harbor churches...

- Listen to and learn from broad, diverse Christian perspectives.
- Explore the history and diversity of their context.
- Spark friendships across lines, a trait modeled by their leaders.
- Provide a safe community for a diverse group of people.
- Partner with a diverse group of people, institutions, and networks.
- Become, where possible, more inter-cultural and multi-ethnic.

## Friendship



We pursue intentional, authentic, and multicultural friendships with each other. We value friendship in a world of displacement and loneliness. Harbor churches and leaders believe that all of life, but especially ministry, is only possible in solidarity with others. We need friends and co-laborers for strengthening and sharpening our work; burden-bearing, safety, ministry effectiveness, and encouragement.

In pursuit of friendship, Harbor churches...

- Cultivate healthy spiritual households where all of God's people participate in the Great Commission.
- Celebrate the interdependence and complementarity of women and men so that friendship between brothers and sisters in the church can flourish.
- Create safe places for friendships to flourish.
- Pursue partnership and collaboration with people, ministries, and churches within and beyond their "tribal" alliances.
- Embody a non-anxious, unhurried presence as we are with and for one another.

## Wholehearted Leadership



We bring our transformed and transforming presence into our leadership. We value wholehearted leadership in a time of burnout, cynicism, scandal, and abuse. Wholehearted leaders are ordinary leaders, frail and finite people who seek renewal and transformation in Christ, through his Word, with his people, and in the power of the Spirit. As they do so, they are able to bring their transformed selves into ministry for the advancement of the gospel.

In pursuit of wholehearted leadership, Harbor churches...

- Embrace a "head, heart, hands" leadership development paradigm for everyone in their churches.
- Pray regularly for their pastors to lead soulfully, joyfully, and faithfully.
- Encourage and resource their pastors to prioritize holistic health—physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, financial, etc.
- Recognize their leaders' limitations while also holding them accountable to biblical qualifications for church leadership.
- Are led by humble, healthy pluralities of pastors.
- Require leaders who are multi-directional who can demonstrate faithful versatility to address the increasingly complex range of topics and issues facing the American church today.





# Why *Anchor & Compass?*

With more change and increasing complexity on the horizon for American churches, Harbor's *Anchor & Compass* aims to cultivate wise and skillful church leaders who are following God's call to launch, lead, and multiply thriving churches in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.

As the *Anchor & Compass* moves from this summary to a core curriculum and course over the coming months, we believe it will become one of the most proactive resources we can offer our future and current pastors and leaders.

While the *Anchor & Compass* is in no way exhaustive, we believe it contains core components that unify us toward our mission of launching, leading and multiplying thriving churches across America.

