



Calvary  
Assembly

# Membership Manual



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***Calvary Assembly***

***2008  
Membership  
Manual***

***Taking Significant Steps toward My Mission of  
Community, Maturity, and Witness***

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(Print Date 8/07)



# ***Welcome to Calvary Assembly***

**Calvary Assembly exists** to exemplify and communicate Christ's redemptive purposes to the world while in the process becoming a community of believers that is meaningful and relevant. Every program, building, and proposed budget must be centered on this cause.

**In our desire** to be a "biblically functioning community of believers", we must grow in wisdom, knowledge, and obedience to Biblical teaching. This kind of "community" is much more than an organization; it is an *organism*. According to Biblical terminology, this organism is called "the church", as well as "the Body of Christ". To function as a living body, there must be vulnerability, synthesis, communication, and mutual submission. Each member is meaningful, gifted, and designed by God Himself to serve in a place that supports and builds up the rest of the body (Ephesians 4:11-16).

It is also our desire to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). **We take Christ's charge to the church seriously**, and in so doing, must continually watch and interact with the world around us in such a way that we effectively reach them.

While it is a challenge to be faithful and successful in this monumental endeavor, it is the greatest cause to devote oneself to. Lives are changed, and eternities with God are being secured – one by one. Thankfully, we are not left to our own resources to carry out Christ's plan of redemption. Since we are sent as "Christ's ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:20), He equips and empowers us by His Spirit to succeed in our commission.

**Becoming a member** is an important and necessary step toward the fulfillment of this Great Commission. While membership is not an end to itself, it does identify those who are willing to devote themselves to this holy cause by means of Christ's body, the church.

Your membership with Calvary Assembly affirms you as an individual with dreams and desires of your own, but it also blends your uniqueness into a tapestry of many colors, backgrounds, gifts, and resources evidenced by the beauty of God's family when she worships and ministers together. This blending serves to form "the Body", a "bride", if you will, for Christ, being fashioned and adorned with His life, character, and abilities. Our journey together will produce followers who are fully devoted to Christ, but it will take resolve and dedication to Him, and to each other.

**How does a person become a member of Calvary Assembly?** Membership at Calvary begins with becoming a member of God's universal family, whereby putting one's trust and life in Jesus (John 3:3, Romans 10:9). Secondly, attend the one time event known as *New Membership Welcome and reception*. Thirdly, commit yourself as a participating supporting member. This commitment includes a personal maturing process through Christian Life classes, being a part of a small group and by serving Jesus in the church. Fourthly, read this Membership Manual and sign the Scriptural Covenant.

**Well, what do you think?** Are you ready to invest yourself in the most important, fulfilling adventure that life can offer? It is something worth pouring your live into – an adventure filled with challenge, yet with tremendous satisfaction.

If you have not yet filled out a Membership Application you can do that by going to, [www.calvaryorlando.org](http://www.calvaryorlando.org) and click on the Church Membership Application button on the right side of the home page.



# ***Section One***

## ***Membership at Calvary Assembly***



# ***A Church to Call Home***

When it comes to choosing a church home, your options are many. Why choose Calvary Assembly? Perhaps the following information will help answer that question.

## **Our Vision**

To become a biblically functioning community of believers through whom Christ's redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.

## **Our Statements of Purpose (A,B,C's)**

- **Adoration:** We were planned for God's pleasure and we exist to celebrate God's presence through worship in such a manner that pleases Him. (Mark 12:30; Romans 12:1-2)
- **Belonging:** We were formed to be God's Family. We exist to incorporate God's family by way of fellowship with God and with each other. (Romans 12:5, 9-16)
- **Compassion:** We were shaped for serving God by demonstrating His love to everyone by all means. (1 Peter 4:10; Galatians 6:10)
- **Discipleship:** We were created to become like Christ, therefore, we exist to teach God's Word for the purpose of instruction, correction, and direction for Godly, relevant living. (Philippians 2: 12,13; 2 Timothy 3:16,17)
- **Evangelism:** We were made for a mission – to live our lives as a testimony of salvation in Christ, and the sharing of "good news". (Matthew 28:18-20)

To accomplish the vision and purposes God has set before us, we offer a variety of programs and activities.

## **Sunday Mornings:**

- **9:00 a.m. & 10:10 a.m.: Christian Life Classes.** Along with Nursery care for the little ones, we offer graded classes for children, youth, and adults.
- **10:00 a.m.: Main Sanctuary Service.** A visitor to our worship service will quickly discover the friendliness, joy, diversity, commitment, youthfulness, maturity, and vision of our Calvary Assembly family. Our exuberant praise and worship of Jesus Christ our Lord is an expression of a common testimony of God's grace and love which we all have experienced. You will also appreciate and benefit from the powerful, practical and relevant teaching of God's Word.
- **11:30 a.m.: ACCESS Service** is a more relevant and edgy experience held in the Life Gym, targeting ages 20-35, but everyone is welcome regardless of age.

## **Tuesday Evening:**

- **7:00 p.m.: Catalyst.** A creative worship service designed for 19-35 year olds who are eager to encounter God in a personal and real way. Our desire is that the young adults of Central Florida encounter God, get plugged into a place where they can use their gifts and talents, and make friendships that will help them grow. Catalyst meets on Tuesday nights at 7:00 pm in the gym

## Wednesday evenings:

- **7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Bible Teaching.** Every Wednesday evening, an all-church, midweek service held in the Chapel. Enjoy a time of worship, prayer, and a relevant message from one of Calvary's pastors.
- **7:00 p.m. Revolution Youth Church.** One of the most dynamic youth ministries in the greater Orlando area has middle and high school youth excited, having fun, and growing in their walk with Jesus.
- **7:00 p.m. Children's Ministry.** Wednesday evenings (as well as Sunday mornings), parents will find an assortment of fun-filled, Bible-based programs for kids of all ages. From babies to pre-teens, you won't find a more enjoyable, impacting and secure setting for your most prized possessions.

## Abbreviated Ministry List:

Beyond our regular Sunday and Wednesday events, we offer a variety of ways for you to become relationally connected and involved in the family-life of Calvary Assembly. We are confident that you will quickly find a place to serve and grow.

The following is only a cross-section of ministries that may interest you:

- **Care Group Ministry** – small group meetings gather throughout the greater Orlando area where needs are met and relationships formed
- **Music Ministry** – choirs, orchestra, outreach, and banners form a living collage of skillful praise and worship drawing each one into a more intimate relationship with God
- **Life Development Ministries** – integrating new and existing members into the fellowship and ministry of Calvary Assembly through Christian Life Classes, Evangelism, Crown Financial Ministries, Discipleship, Altar Workers, Meeters, Armor Bearers, and Membership.
- **Assimilation Ministries** – Water Baptism, Connections, Guest Information, Greeter Team, and Visitor Reception.
- **Singles, Couples, and Families Ministry** (20 – 40's) – enjoy creative and energetic events specifically designed for each group, including Bible studies, retreats, and marriage seminars
- **Men's and Women's Ministries** – providing special events, retreats, support groups, Bible studies, and recreation for men and women
- **Support Groups** are offered through Calvary Assembly supported ministries, such as: **Exchange Ministries, and Life Ministries, International**, which serve to impact people (male and female) of all ages and are targeted to help bring healing and health to the abused, hurting, sexually confused, broken, divorced, etc.
- **Children's Ministry** – fun-filled, loving and creative teachers facilitate graded classes from Nursery to 5<sup>th</sup> grade providing biblically based curriculum in a secure Christ-centered manner. (Available on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings); **First Steps Day Care** is offered during the week as well as summer camp for school aged children. **Missionettes** and **Royal Rangers** emphasize character, Bible memorization, and fun activities every Wednesday evening.
- **Missions** – trips both 'state-side' and abroad are scheduled every year, with teams being sent out for the purpose of ministry and construction. Providing 'hands on' involvement serves to increase awareness of missions here as well as helping to

build long lasting relationships with the on-site missionaries and their mission communities

- **Pastoral Care Ministry** – weekly hospital visitation, nursing home visits, homeless ministry, and jail visits make up some of the loving and caring ways we reach out to those in need
- **50+** – Adults, age 50 and up, adults look forward to fun-filled events and trips scheduled each year, while taking part in weekly Bible studies, fellowship groups, and outreach events
- **Calvary Outreach Center** – thousands of needy individuals are fed, clothed, cared for, and shown God’s plan of salvation every year here on campus
- **Revolution Student Ministries** is more than just a Wednesday service; or a rock show with flashing lights and loud music. It’s a gathering of young people who have decided that they want to be students of influence in their community. With weekly meetings and small groups to follow. Revolution is a great place to build strong godly relationships.
- **Master’s Commission** – an intense discipleship accredited ministry training program for those who are interested in developing a life of ministry
- **Catalyst** – Catalyst is our Tuesday night service specifically designed for young adults. Along with multiple outreach opportunities, intense worship, and practical talks, Catalyst sponsors **Catalyst Athletics** – with leagues in Flag Football, Basketball, Volleyball, and more. From sports to weekly services, Catalyst is all about love.

### **Calvary Assembly Staff**

*Our church family is blessed with over one hundred Ministry and Support Staff personnel, as well as many volunteers. We are here to serve you. Please feel free to contact us with your questions or needs.*

# ***Responsibilities and Privileges of Church Membership***

It may seem overly simplistic, but the main responsibility of every member of Calvary Assembly is to participate in the life and ministries of the church through obedience to Christ. Jesus said it this way – “I only do what I see the Father doing.” The five ABC’s (Adoration, Belonging, Community, Discipleship, and Evangelism) discussed in the seminar, make up the expectations and responsibilities of every church member.

Perhaps it would help to break down these responsibilities in another way:

**Responsibility #1** – Personal Purity: To bring to the church a surrendered, spirit-filled life.

A yielded heart is a powerful tool in God’s hands. When we surrender our lives to the purpose of God, we become convinced that the manner in which we live our lives through personal purity and spiritual maturity is one of the greatest gifts we can give to each other. This yielding or surrender of our lives results in the emptying of ourselves of impure motives and agendas that tend to bring strife and division. It is in denying ourselves and relying on the filling and empowering of the Holy Spirit that brings personal joy, effectiveness in ministry, and a healthy, growing church.

**Responsibility #2** – Relational Integrity: To pursue honorable and loving relationships: in the family; among friends, co-workers, and neighbors; and in the church body.

Mistreatment of one another dishonors the Lord, destroys our witness, and tears down the ability to relate meaningfully. God has made each one of us a vital and integral part of the body of Christ. The world will better recognize the reality of Christ’s life and promise of redemption when it sees the church loving and respecting one another. Each believer is a prized possession of God. The cost to redeem us from our sin is more than we can imagine – the giving of His only Son, Jesus to die on our behalf. Therefore, to neglect any part of the body, regardless of its maturity or health, would be wrong and eventually damaging to the rest of the body. May each member take seriously Paul’s admonition, “So far as it is up to you, be at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:18). We are commanded to forgive, and not to judge, or harbor bitterness when we have been wronged by another. “For our proud confidence is this...that in holiness and godly sincerity....we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.” (2 Corinthians 1:12)

**Responsibility #3** – Organizational Respect and Loyalty: To contribute to the church your time, talents, and treasure and to be responsive to the leadership God has established.

The scripture teaches that “you reap what you sow”. It also says, “Where your treasure is there your heart will be also”. This is why it is important for every member to understand and personally embrace the vision of Calvary Assembly. We must regularly ask ourselves this question, “If everyone at Calvary had the same passion and commitment to attendance, involvement, and giving as I do, how healthy, and how effective would my church be in our fellowship and in our reaching the world with the Good News?”

**Responsibility #4** – Individual Growth and Maturity: To seek to serve more than to be served.

Do remember when Jesus washed His disciples' feet? He had more in mind than simply wanting to show them His love. "Do you know what I have done to you", Jesus asked them. "You call me Teacher and Lord; and rightfully so; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." (John 13:12-15)

Washing feet doesn't sound all that important, does it? However, when the Lord God washes your feet it makes a significant impact. Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet. It was embarrassing to him that someone he respected and loved as much as he did Jesus, would do to him what he should be doing for God. And yet, according to Jesus' example, we all ought to be attending to each other in an attitude of love and servant hood.

Meeting needs is what we all are to be doing. It is not only the job of the pastors and leaders, it is everyone's responsibility. Behind every command given, by God, there is blessing commanded toward obedience. When you give of yourself in meeting others needs, you will find Jesus' promise to be true, "it is better to give than it is to receive."

# ***Membership Development***

*Recognizing, equipping, and promoting every member toward a ministry lifestyle of significance and fulfillment.*

**The Membership Development** represents the goal and strategy of the leadership of Calvary Assembly in providing a means for individuals to better understand who we are as a church, through an explanation of membership, steps toward spiritual maturity, ministry involvement, and mission to the lost and hurting world around us.

Membership Development is designed to help you know our heart and commitment to God, to His Word, and to each other. If this information stirs your heart in the form of agreement and personal excitement, then we pray that you would choose to embrace Calvary Assembly's outstretched hand of fellowship that is extended toward you, desiring that it will result in your commitment to membership and ministry involvement.

**Personal interviews** are an integral part of the Membership Process. These interviews if you decide one would be helpful to you, will be conducted by a pastor or another designated trained leader, and are a necessary and enjoyable element toward membership and leadership. The purpose of these interviews is to aid in the facilitation of relationship between the pastoral staff and each new member, as well as to provide opportunity to discuss and suggest areas of ministry involvement that are personalized and fulfilling. These interviews are part of the fellowship and teaching event that you will enjoy at *Calvary Membership Development*.

**Ministry Gifts Tests** discovering and exercising your God-given spiritual gifts allows you to experience maximum fulfillment with minimum frustration in your Christian life and ministry. For that reason, we are pleased to introduce you to the nation's best-selling Spiritual Gifts Inventory! Based on the team- or task-oriented gifts, this questionnaire and analysis is provided for your personal use, *FREE of any charge or obligation*. This test is available online [www.calvaryorlando.org](http://www.calvaryorlando.org). Click on the Ministries drop down box and than Life Development. The test is titled *Want to Know Your Spiritual Gifts?*

# ***Section Two***

## ***Discovering Church Membership***



# Discovering Church Membership

## I. Our Structure

The structure of the church should *not* be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH DETERMINES ITS STRUCTURE.

### 1. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP.

*“They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship ...” Acts 2:42 (Ph)*

A top priority in a fellowship is HARMONY and UNITY.

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:3*

**ANY attitude that causes disunity is sin.**

*Colossians 3:15; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:14; Peter 17:14; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27, 2:1-3; Colossians 2:2; Philippians 4:2; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 Corinthians 14:33; John 13:34–35; 2 Timothy 2:23; Romans 15:5–6; Romans 12:16–18; Colossians 3:13–14, Psalm 133:1*

IMPLICATION: A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWNPLAYS DIFFERENCES.

*“(Often)...your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you...” 1 Corinthians 11:17-18*

### 2. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY.

*“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.” 1 Peter 3:8 (LB)*

*Galatians 6:10, Hebrews 2:10–12, 1 Peter 4:17*

SO WE OPERATE ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIPS NOT RULES.

*“Don’t reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a father. Treat the young men as brothers, and the older women as mothers. Treat the younger women as sisters.” 1 Timothy 5:1–2 (Ph)*

### 3. THE CHURCH IS A BODY.

1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23; Ephesians 1:22–23, Colossians 1:18, 2:19

**We are a Body - not a business!  
We are an organism - not an organization!**

*“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have different gifts according to the grace given us.” Romans 12:4–6*

In an organization, “maintenance” becomes the focus.  
In an organism, “ministry” is the focus.

AT CALVARY, WE HAVE A SIMPLE STRUCTURE SO WE CAN MAXIMIZE MINISTRY AND MINIMIZE MAINTENANCE.

*“God gave . . . some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up ...” Ephesians 4:11–12*

**OUR STRUCTURE**

The People are the “MINISTERS”

The Pastors are the “EQUIPPERS”

Currently there are OVER 150 different ministries in our church begun and operated by members.

4. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK. (Jesus’ favorite description of the Church)

*John 10:1-30; Matthew 26:31; Matthew 25:33*

THEREFORE, IT IS CARED FOR AND LED BY SHEPHERDS.

*“Jesus asked Simon Peter, ‘Do you really love me?’ ‘Yes, Lord, ‘said Peter. ‘Then take care of my sheep.’” John 21:16–17*

Three different terms are used in the New Testaments to refer to the *same* church leaders:

“POIMEN”:

“PRESBUTEROS”:

“EPISCOPOS”:

*“To the elders I say ... Be shepherds of God’s flock, serving as overseers ...”*

*1 Peter 5:1–2*

*“Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived he said to them ... Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be pastors of the church of God ...” Acts 20:17–18, 28*

See also *Titus 1:5–7; 1 Timothy 5:17*

## **II. OUR AFFILIATION**

Calvary Assembly of God is in fellowship with the General Council of the Assemblies of God which is headquartered in Springfield, Missouri.

## **III. OUR VISION**

### **BECOMING A BIBLICAL COMMUNITY**

**Calvary Assembly’s Vision Statement: “To become a biblically functioning community of believers through whom Christ’s redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.”**

**God never meant for us to grow alone!**

#### **1. The Biblical Basis for Community**

What is the most important thing God is doing in the world?

Restoring biblical Community!

Genesis 1:1-3 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

Vs. 1 - The Great Designer.

Vs. 2 - The Spirit of God.

Vs. 3 - The Word of God.

- Creation climaxes in human beings. Why? God is eager for fellowship and communion!

Genesis 1:26 “Let Us make man in Our image according to Our likeness.”

If Community is an essential trait of God, then His image (mankind) will reflect Community.

- Genesis 1:27 - God created male and female to fulfill the calling to community.

Genesis 1:27 “And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

- In the beginning, prior to the fall, mankind experienced perfect Community - with God and each other.
- After the fall there is the disintegration of Community.

Genesis 3:7–8 - Between Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:7–8 “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

Genesis 3:24 - Between Adam and Eve and God.

Genesis 3:24 “So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

## **The disintegration of Community continued until Jesus came.**

- Jesus is restoring Biblical Community - relationship between God and man and man and man. This restored community is called THE CHURCH!

Matthew 16:18 (Jesus) “I will build my church and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.”

- Paul describes a community where distinctions of race are irrelevant, class distinctions are non existent, and gender distinctions are irrelevant in serving the Lord.

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- There is only one thing by which we can demonstrate to all that we are disciples of Jesus. If we have love for one another.

John 13:34–35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- Biblical Community witnesses to our culture of the reality of Christ.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.”

## 2. What Is Biblical Community?

- Definition of Biblical Community: The Body of Christ expressing the life, love, and message of Jesus Christ to build up one another and redeem the lost for God’s glory.
- The Greek word for Community is Koinonia

Acts 2:42 “And they were continually devoting themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and to fellowship . . .”

- Believers in Christ are called to live in mutually accountable relationships as they reflect the loving character of God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

## IV. OUR VALUES

### Calvary Assembly of God Core Values

1. **We believe love is the highest calling in our lives and that loving relationships with God and people are the cornerstone of church life.**

This includes the concepts of grace living, love-driven ministry, reconciliation, restoration, ministry accomplished in teams and relationship building. *Luke 10:1; John 13:34–35; 1 Corinthians 13*

- 1. We believe the Holy Spirit is our enabler, guide and teacher in every decision and action and that He desires to empower, in fill and anoint our lives.**

This includes the concepts of spiritual gifts, prayer and anointed ministry. *Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26–27; 1 Corinthians 12 & 14*

- 2. We believe the Bible is our standard of truth and practice and that anointed preaching and teaching is a catalyst for transformed lives.**

This includes the concepts of practical teaching for life change, biblical equipping for ministry and spiritual growth. *2 Timothy 3:16–17; Hebrews 4:12*

- 3. We believe Spirit-led worship honors God, builds believers, inspires faith, liberates the oppressed and is essential for experiencing intimacy with God.**

This involves the concepts of liberty and variety in worship style and practice, excellence of presentation and creativity in expression. *Psalms 63:3–4; Psalm 66:2; Psalm 150; Ephesians 5:19*

- 4. We believe pre-Christian people matter to God and, therefore, matter to us.**

This includes the concepts of home and foreign missions, relational evangelism, intentional evangelism and servant evangelism. *Matthew 18:14; Matthew 28:19–20; Luke 15*

- 5. We believe small-group ministry is the biblical way of discipling, growing and connecting believers.**

This includes the concepts of pastoral care, accountability, leadership and character development, and body life. *Luke 6:12–13; Acts 2:44–47; Acts 20:20*

- 6. We believe Calvary Assembly is to be a storehouse and not a debtor; therefore, we are to model debt-free living.**

This involves the concepts of stewardship, benevolence, tithing and giving. *Matthew 6:19–21; Romans 13:8*

- 7. We believe excellence honors God and reflects His character.**

This includes the concepts of evaluation, critical review, quality control and professionalism. *Proverbs 27:17; Colossians 3:17*

- 8. We believe leaders should reflect Christ’s character in all ways including integrity, honesty, vulnerability, obedience and faithfulness.**

This includes the concepts of character, life modeling (“Follow me as I follow Christ.”) and the fruit of the Spirit. *Galatians 5:22–23; Ephesians 4:25–27; Hebrews 12:1*

- 9. We believe the church should be led by men and women with leadership gifts and that equipping people for ministry is the primary role of leadership.**

This includes the concepts of servant leadership, strategic focus, intentionality, and impartation. *Acts 6:2–4; Romans 12:8; Ephesians 4:11–13*

- 10. We believe the church, as the bride and body of Christ, is infinitely valued by God and should operate in unity of spirit and purpose.**

This includes the concepts of fellowship, acceptance, headship, functionality, authority, membership and commitment. *1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 4:1–6, 14–16*

## **V. OUR STRATEGY**

1. A new relationship with God- **A**doration (worship)
2. A new relationship with others- **B**elonging (community)
3. A new relationship with the world- **C**ompassion (ministry)
4. A new relationship with self- **D**iscipleship (discipleship)
5. A new relationship with words- **E**vangelism (evangelism)

## **VI. OUR COVENANT**

### **The Calvary Membership Covenant**

“Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized, and being in agreement with Calvary’s statements, strategy, and structure, vision and values, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Calvary church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF

## MY CHURCH

- ... By acting in love toward other members
- ... By refusing to gossip
- ... By following the leaders

*“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony and on the growth of our fellowship together.” Romans 15:19 (Ph)*

*“Live in complete harmony with each other - each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.” Romans 15:5 (LB)*

*“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers; love one another earnestly with all your hearts.” 1 Peter 1:22 (GN)*

*“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs ...” Ephesians 4:29*

*“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be not an advantage to you.” Hebrews 13:17*

## 2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- ... By praying for its growth
- ... By inviting the unchurched to attend
- ... By warmly welcoming those who visit

*“To the church ... we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.” 1 Thessalonians 1:2*

*“Go out into the country ... and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.” Luke 14:23 (LB)*

*“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.” Romans 15:7 (LB)*

## 3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- ... By discovering my gifts and talents
- ... By being equipped to serve by my pastors and leaders
- ... By developing a servant's heart

*“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...” 1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)*

*“God gave ... some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . . “*  
*Ephesians 4:11–12*

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant...”* *Philippians 2:3–4, 7*

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

... By attending faithfully

... By living a godly life

... By giving regularly

*“But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.”* *Philippians 1:27 (Ph)*

*“Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering.”* *1 Corinthians 16:2*

*“A tenth of all you produce is the Lord’s, and it is holy.”* *Leviticus 27:30*

*“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together ... but let us encourage one another.”* *Hebrews 10:25*



# ***Section Three***

## ***Calvary Assembly Distinctives***



## ***About Us***

### ***History of Calvary Assembly***

Founded on a heritage rich in obedience and faith, Calvary was supernaturally ordained to be a church of great destiny. Throughout the past 50+ years, the hand of God has miraculously remained on this body of believers during many seasons on the mountain peaks and even more significantly, through dark days of valley experiences.

In the spring of 1953, Pastor John Hall, his wife Carlie, and their family moved to Florida feeling that God had called them to pastor in the Winter Park area. When they arrived, there was no congregation or church building to hold services in. They purchased two lots in a residential area and immediately began building a church.

Located at 1919 Miller Ave. in Winter Park, the church was named Orlando Gospel Tabernacle. The first service was held with approximately 35 people in attendance and a dirt floor, which was raked before each service. A year later, in 1954, the church became part of the growing fellowship of the Assemblies of God.

Dr. Dale Zink became the pastor in February of 1961 and a month later, the church was renamed Calvary Assembly of God. During Dr. Zink's ministry, an evangelist named Eddie Barg came for special meetings, which were extended for 13 weeks. The church grew and plans were made to build a new auditorium.

Additional land was purchased and construction began in 1964 on a 500-seat sanctuary, which later became known as Johnson Hall. Adjacent to the new church building, a lighted tower was built which quickly became one of the most recognizable landmarks in the area.

In 1966, Eddie Barg became the pastor until the summer of 1970 when Roy Harthern came to Orlando to lead Calvary Assembly, with a congregation of just under 300 people.

During the next 10 years, the church experienced phenomenal growth. The sanctuary was once again outgrown and the church had to have multiple morning and evening services on Sundays to accommodate those who came to worship. Because of the explosive growth, a fellowship group ministry was established to minister more personally to the needs of the growing congregation.

Plans were made for a new sanctuary that would seat 1400 and the church continued purchasing surrounding land to make room for additional parking. The new auditorium was dedicated on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1975 and was filled to capacity on opening day.

1976 brought many changes to Calvary Assembly. Two morning services and a second evening service were introduced to accommodate the crowds. A 10,000 square foot educational building was completed, with a second addition in 1978.

On Easter Sunday in 1977, a third Sunday morning service was added to accommodate the continued growth of the congregation and in 1980; a third wing was added to the Education Building to provide additional room for the growing Sunday School.

Alex Clattenburg assumed the responsibilities as Senior Pastor to the Calvary Assembly family in the fall of 1981. Capacity crowds attended three morning services and one evening service on Sunday.

On November 4, 1984, the pastors and congregation broke ground and dedicated the site on Calvary's property where a 5500 seat sanctuary along with 25 educational rooms, television production and control facilities, and a choir and orchestra complex, Wedding Chapel, Bookstore and Prayer Room was to be built. The new sanctuary was dedicated in the spring of 1987.

In May of 1990, Dr. Mark Rutland accepted the challenging role of Senior Pastor with a mortgage of almost 15 million dollars. A great miracle of growth and giving occurred and during Dr. Rutland's tenure at Calvary, the church was able to retire almost 4 million dollars on the mortgage.

On Easter Sunday, 1995, Pastor Clark Whitten was welcomed as Senior Pastor of Calvary Assembly. At that time, the debt was at 11.5 million. In February of 1996, the congregation enthusiastically pledged to give sacrificially above and beyond their tithes to the "Moving the Mountain" campaign to eradicate the debt. On September 24, 2000, a "Freedom Celebration" second to none was enjoyed by the congregation and many visitors.

On January 1, 2006, Pastor George Cope and his wife, Cheryl, joined Calvary Assembly and assumed the role as Lead (Senior) Pastor. Having pastored for over 30 years, and having also served as President of Zion Bible College in the Northeast, Pastor Cope brought with him a love for people and a desire to facilitate effective ministry through biblical teaching and discipleship training.

Through the years, both nationally and internationally renowned ministries have had their roots at Calvary Assembly. These include "Rock House," the Jesus Festivals, Charisma Magazine, and Crown Ministries, among others.

To those who have only observed from a distance, Calvary Assembly is synonymous for a big building. However, for those who have come close enough to know her heart, Calvary Assembly is really people... people of all ages, from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds, and from all walks of life... people that have a big heart... a big heart for their community, for our nation and for the countless millions around the world that have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It is the desire of the leadership that Calvary's sphere of influence only increase so that she will become all that God wants her to be and be a strong beacon to future generations. May God continue to bless Calvary Assembly as her people continue to "become a Biblically functioning community of believers through whom Christ's redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world."

# **Statement of Faith**

## **A community of purpose**

*Living a life without an understanding of what is true can only bring confusion and misery. On the contrary, a life lived in understanding and full cooperation of truth will result in a life of personal fulfillment while leaving a legacy of positive influence on generations to come. Jesus said this about truth, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." At Calvary Assembly, our lifestyle, ministries, and teachings are founded upon God's Word – the standard and definition of "truth".. It is our conviction that commitment to truth will lead each one toward a life of happiness and success, experienced through genuine love.*

## **What We Believe:**

### **Scripture (The Word of God)**

We believe and affirm the Scriptures contained in both the Old and New Testaments as being the inspired Word of God, without error in its original writings, serving as the final authority for all Christian faith and life. It cannot be added to or subtracted from, and serves as the complete revelation of God's will for the salvation of men.

### **Trinity (Three in One)**

We believe that God is both One and Triune. He reveals Himself through His Word as being eternally existent, infinitely perfect, and consists of three fully divine and equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- **Father**

We believe that God the Father is the fountainhead of the Trinity, the Creator, Sustainer, and Intervener of all creation. He is the origin and eternal living model of holiness, righteousness, wisdom, power, mercy, and love. We believe that the Father is personally involved in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He pardons and redeems man from sin and death who seek atonement through the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son, Jesus Christ.

- **Son**

We believe that the Son, Jesus Christ, was and is the Promised Messiah, the Word of God in the flesh, fully man and fully God that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. We believe that Jesus lived a life without sin, and that He willingly, and obediently gave His life as an acceptable sacrifice for our sin and guilt. That He was victorious over death and the grave in that He rose from the dead after three days, revealed Himself as alive to many witnesses, and has ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father until the appointed time of His eminent return for His bride, the Church.

- **Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God, equal to the Father and the Son. He was active in the Old Testament scripture, and came in His prophetic fullness to the Church at Pentecost as recorded in the New Testament. He inspired the scriptures, and He continues to illumine and reveal the Word of God to man, while always glorifying the Son. He specifically works to convict unbelievers of their sin and need for the Son; He is the agency in which the Son dwells within each believer initially resulting in salvation, and dynamically resulting in intimacy and identification; He sanctifies, guides, teaches, and empowers Christians to experience the tangible and relevant life of God. We believe in the Baptism of the Spirit, subsequent to conversion, which results in the release of the fullness of the Spirit, which can be evidenced by tongues, joy, praise and other inward and outward manifestations and gifts, each of which are to be eagerly desired, developed and exercised according to biblical pattern and instruction.

- **Man**

We believe that God created man in His image making man unique, and the crowning aspect of God's creative act. We further believe that God's ultimate intention for man was for him to willingly surrender his life and independence in order to live life with total faith, and dependence upon God, his Creator. When the first man chose against trust and faith in God resulting in sin, he entered into a life that was separated from fellowship with God. Sin established itself as an inherited nature common to man, which in turn brought about spiritual death for all mankind. We also believe that when man agrees with God about his sinful condition, and repents of sin, while trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, that there is a spiritual birth that occurs resulting in an infusion of God's divine life with humanity, while restoring intimate fellowship with God and eternal adoption as His children.

- **Salvation**

The Word of God clearly declares that salvation is a free gift of God toward individuals, which is received through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ according to the merits of His sinless life and atoning sacrifice on the cross. We believe that man is incapable of satisfying judgment rendered against sin, and is therefore desperately reliant upon God's eternal gift of salvation by grace through faith. We further believe that salvation results in justification before God, and identification with God as His children with full privileges and benefits as family members in God's Kingdom. Salvation is offered to each one as a secure and unchanging commitment of God, but does not absolutely remove the individual's free will to renounce the love and grace that has been received.

- **The Church**

We believe that the Church is comprised of individuals who have experienced salvation through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and have become spiritually united with Him as the living expression of the Body of Christ of which He is the head. The Church is not buildings or organizations, or religious systems, but rather a physically and spiritually living organism united together in local expressions of faith, commission, organization, and government. The commission of the Church, both corporate and individual, is to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the fellowship of believers, and presenting each one complete in Christ through worship, ministry, evangelism, community life, discipleship, and instruction.

- **Baptism and Communion (Ordinances)**

**Water baptism** by immersion is a believer's biblical response to Christ's command recorded in Matthew 28. Baptism is performed as an outward sign, or testimony, of an inward work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit within a believer. Identification with Christ in His death and burial is most clearly depicted through immersion, while the coming up out of the water speaks of one's reception and participation in His resurrection life.

**Communion**, also known as *The Lord's Supper*, is the second ordinance of the church. It commemorates, by way of remembrance, the death of our Lord, Jesus Christ. By way of reflection, our observance of Communion as a body of believers causes a fresh and renewing identification with Christ, as well as our individual connection to His body, the Church.

- **Eschatology**

We believe Jesus Christ will return to earth personally and visibly according to the promises in Scripture. His purpose will be to manifest His absolute government on the earth. Christians are exhorted to be watchful and obedient until His appearing. While there are many viewpoints concerning His second coming, we believe Christians should look for His appearing with great anticipation, while obediently pursuing the mandate of the Great Commission until He comes again. At His second coming, He will resurrect the righteous who have died and are now with Him.

Scripture allows much diversity in the determining of views and opinions concerning the specifics of Jesus' second coming, and so we reject the idea that any opinion can or should be used as a test of orthodoxy within a local body of believers. Preoccupation with this subject has produced churches that are stagnant and sterile, resulting in spiritual lethargy, evangelistic passivity, and weakness in social and cultural impact. The church that embraces her identity as an "over comer" is generally more concerned with her obedience in occupying the earth until Jesus returns, as opposed to the unproductive manner of speculation upon when He will return. Any view that has a scriptural validation concerning the end times is to be respected.

Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 1:4, that this group of believers was considered great in the Kingdom of God due to the fact of their endurance and steadfast continuation of the work of Christ while in the midst of persecution and attack. The point of Paul's eschatological message to the church was to encourage each one to "stay the course" in their Christ honoring, relevant lifestyle.

With this in mind, we affirm that Jesus Christ will be returning for a mature bride, who has "reached the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4). He is coming for her as she makes herself ready, beautifully and gloriously adorned in her garments of holiness and righteousness.

## **Our Invitation**

These foundational truths form the basis of who we are, and what we value in life and ministry. You are invited to embrace the Christian life and ministry with us, being united as a local gathering of believers in Christ Jesus. Should you have any questions concerning these truths of the Christian faith as presented here, or about church membership, please contact the church office and request to speak to a pastor. It will be our pleasure to have the opportunity to answer your questions.

# ***Church Government: Board of Elders***

The purpose of church government is first and foremost to find and represent the will of Jesus Christ, who is the “head of the Church” (Ephesians 5:23). While the principles of church government are biblically universal, the application of such can take many forms and applications in individual churches. An example of one of these universal principles found in the Bible is “unity of spirit”. (Luke 11:17; Psalm 133:1-3; Ephesians 4:1-6; Acts 4:32-33; 44-45)

According to the foundations laid by the Apostles, first century churches were governed by the appointment of spiritual elders found within the local church (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5). Upon further examination, certain biblical references identify character qualifications that are necessary to be an elder (1 Timothy 3:17 and Titus 1:5):

- Focused on God’s will without fear of man
- Able to articulate the doctrine of the church
- Participates in the ministry of the church
- Not motivated by money
- Trustworthy
- Good decision maker
- Stable marriage and family
- Good reputation and dignified
- Hospitable
- No addictions
- Shows no partiality
- Does not hold grudges

An elder must carry the mantle of leadership as well as government. Both are considered gifts from God to enable an elder to fulfill varied responsibilities that relate to vision, authority, exercising of wisdom, and leadership.

Being accountable to God for the oversight in a local church, an elder must lead according to his spiritual gifting, but also through inspiration and revelation. Therefore, the role of an elder is more accurately that of a leader rather than a representative of the people.

An Elder’s personal life must fall under biblical standards. Family issues must show that the elder is the leader in his home. His spiritual life must show a true love for God in all areas of his life such that there is no hypocrisy.

## **Summary of the Elder Structure and Responsibilities for governing the body of Calvary Assembly:**

### Elders

- The ultimate authority and responsibility to govern all of the affairs of the Church, including both spiritual and "business" matters and oversight of all pastors, would reside with the Elders.
- At all times there would be at least nine Elders, and there would be no maximum number.

- Except as to selection of additional Elders or the hiring of a Lead Pastor (which would require a unanimous vote,) all Elder decisions would require at least a 2/3 vote.

#### Elder Qualifications

- All Elders must meet Biblical qualifying standards (1 Timothy 3:1-7), and must be Church members.
- Elders would serve until resignation, removal by a 2/3 vote of the other Elders or death, provided that to remain in office all Elders (other than the Lead Pastor) must receive a majority confirming vote from the Church membership every three years.
- The total number of paid Church staff Elders (including pastors and any other staff members) would at all times be less than 1/2 of the total number of Elders.
- The Lead Pastor would be an Elder.

#### Elder Selection

- Elders will be nominated by the current Elder Board, unanimously approved by the current Elder Board and confirmed by a majority vote of the Church members.

#### Finance Council

- A Finance Council of not less than twelve members would be appointed by the Elders.
- Finance Council members would serve three year terms.
- The Finance Council would meet monthly, and would review the Church's budget and financial reports, and address other business related issues as delegated by the Elders.
- Not more than three Elders could serve on the Finance Council at any time, and those Elders must be non-paid staff Elders.

#### Financial Matters

- The annual budget of the Church must be approved by 2/3 of the Elders and either 2/3 of the Finance Council or a majority vote of the Church members.
- Any borrowing of money by the Church would require the approval of the Elders and a majority vote of the Church members.
- Business transactions involving more than \$200,000 (adjusted annually for inflation) must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Church members.
- As currently required, 10% of the Church's general fund offerings (plus all other designated missions giving) would be set aside for missions.

#### Pastor Selection

- The Elders alone would have the authority to hire and remove all pastors, including the Lead Pastor.
- Selection of a Lead Pastor would require the vote of 3/4 of the Elders and 3/4 of the Church members.
- Removal of Lead Pastor would require a 2/3 vote of the Elders.

#### Document Structure

- The Articles of Incorporation are the primary governing documents of the Church, and could not be amended without 2/3 vote of the Church Membership.
- The By-Laws are a secondary document addressing procedural issues, and could be amended or modified by the Elders.

**The following represents a sample of questions and answer regarding the Elders of Calvary Assembly:**

**Q.** How does the Board of Elders help provide accountability?

**A.** The primary means of accountability within the Board of Elders is that of shared authority and responsibility within the Elder Board. As opposed to the old structure where spiritual leadership was centered on a single individual, the Lead Pastor, the leadership and direction of the church will be shared within the Elder Board. Additional accountability is accomplished as follows:

- A separate Finance Council will monthly review financial activity of the church, review an annual, independent, certified audit church finances, and approve the annual budget.
- Every three years, Elders are subject to a confirming vote of the church Membership
- At any time an Elder may be removed from the Elder Board by a 2/3 vote of the elders.

**Q.** Can a staff pastor be considered an Elder?

**A.** The purpose of the Board of Elders is to bring together in shared leadership the recognized, gifted, and anointed leaders within the church - regardless of their employment status. Paid staff will always comprise less than one-half of the Elder Board. Over time, as more and more Elders are identified within the body and added to the group, this percentage will be less and less.

**Q.** Does this type of government affect our affiliation with the Assemblies of God denomination?

**A.** No. Our affiliation with the Assemblies of God will continue and be unaffected by our government. The Assemblies of God is composed of independent local churches with many different forms of church government. Many Assemblies of God churches are governed in the manner adopted for our church.

# Care Groups

We strongly believe in developing and facilitating “community” among those who attend Calvary Assembly. We have a saying, “In order for us to grow larger, we need to grow smaller at the same time.” Our small group ministry, known as **Care Groups**, is believed to be a sound biblical model for discipleship making, growing and connecting believers in the experience of “community. It is our goal for each member of Calvary Assembly to join a Care Group, where each and every person can be effectively cared for, equipped for ministry, and relationally connected to our family of believers through the bonds of Christ’s love.

The following outlines Calvary Assembly’s vision and goals for Care Groups:

## Calvary Assembly Vision

To become a biblically functioning community of believers through whom Christ’s redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.

## Care Group Vision

To reach, care for, and develop all Calvary Assembly members into healthy, functioning disciples of Jesus Christ.

## Mission Statement for Care Groups

(Acts. 2:46-47) To provide a place and a mechanism where lives can be meaningfully connected to God, and to each other through a ministry of small groups committed to implementing a ministry of Christian love and care toward one another.

## What is a Care Group?

We’re glad you asked! *Care Groups* meet regularly throughout the greater Orlando area, and consist of “relational gatherings”, or “community”. *Care Groups* promote a ministry of caring for one another, while at the same time providing a place where individuals can learn to minister to one another through unique, motivational and spiritual gifts, as well as learning to receive ministry in a healthy atmosphere of Christian community. *Care Groups* are also designed to be a place where those who are searching for God can come and experience His love and acceptance in a relaxed and informal setting.

*Acts 2:46-47*

*46 - Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,*

*47 - praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

## Benefit of a Care Group

God designed each individual in such a way that we all have a need to love and to be loved, and *Care Groups* exist for this very purpose. Large group settings, like our Sunday morning worship service, have their own purpose and value, but may also have limitations. Where the large gathering may be weak facilitating relationships, *Care Groups* excel. In fact, *Care Groups* are strategically designed to provide a place where the development of lasting relationships is possible through caring and in-depth ministry. It is here that personal needs are prayed for, relational-connection and accountability are offered, and caring assistance is provided through life’s opportunities and challenges.

## **Who attends a Care Group?**

People just like you attend a *Care Group*, and most who attend are members of Calvary Assembly. However, a *Care Group* may also be comprised of those who attend different churches but enjoy the fellowship and ministry of the *Care Group*. There will also be those who do not attend church at all. At any given *Care Group* one may find married couples, senior adults, singles, and students all enjoying one another under the banner of the Lordship of Christ. There is incredible beauty and inherent value in this diversity.

## **How do I find the *Care Group* that is right for me?**

There will be a *Care Group* (in most cases) near where you live. You are welcome to attend several *Care Groups* in order to determine which group is the best fit for you. Feel free to call the office for a list of *Care Groups* in your area or search our website at [www.calvaryorlando.org](http://www.calvaryorlando.org) under "Find *Care Groups*". There is also a display in the Worship Center Foyer with *Care Group* booklets available.

## **Calvary Assembly's *Care Group* Challenge**

The leadership of Calvary Assembly firmly believes that a local body of believers in Christ becomes healthy by means of growth, both in the Lord and with each other. This cannot be accomplished without the building of relationships where we are individually called by the Lord to care for one another. You are strongly encouraged to start attending a *Care Group* this very week, and consider joining one once you have had time to visit several groups and commit yourself to one that best suits your needs. We are convinced that you will discover with us that a *Care Group* truly is the place where everyone is a minister, and where everyone can receive the ministry they need in order to live healthy and productive lives.

For further information on a *Care Group* near you please look for the

*Care Group Display* in the Main Sanctuary Center Foyer.

# **Christian Life Classes**

***“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15***

The central core of the Christian faith is believing in absolute truth. Being absolute, the truths which Christianity proclaim also claim to be eternal. Because biblical truth is absolute and eternal, it is worth believing and living.

Absolute truth determines values, and values determine the quality of life. The spiritual values (or absolutes) contained in biblical Christianity (honesty, integrity, purity, love for God, respect for oneself and others, etc.) are the values that make for strong lives, strong families, strong churches, and strong societies. These spiritual values are celebrated as universal and fundamental, and without them, even the most conceptually efficient economic system will fail. We desire through **Christian Life Classes** to teach nothing but the whole truth, the Bible, both foundationally and systematically that we might build twenty-first century disciples who will reproduce themselves as Jesus commanded us. *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* Matthew 28:19-20

**Christian Life Classes** are held six terms a year, with each term consisting of eight weeks. Our teachers are anointed and qualified leaders who are passionate about their subject matters and about their students. There is also an ongoing assistant being trained in a mentoring capacity in each class. Doing this broadens the base of teachers to ensure that as many as possible with the gift of teaching are being utilized.

The **Christian Life Classes** which are intentionally versatile, covering four different areas.

- 1.) The Bible: In addition to classes such as New Testament and Old Testament Survey, there is a two year course in which participants systematically study through the entire Bible.
- 2.) Need Based: Need based classes address the practical needs of those in the church and in the community. Classes offered include *English as a Second Language, Time Management, Eating Disorders, Emotional Issues, Solutions for Stress, Family Parenting, Dating Relationship, Engaged Couples and Newly Married.*
- 3.) Discipleship: Discipleship classes help believers become grounded in the truth. Classes offered include *Cleansing, New OPSW, Crown Financial Ministries, Foundations (for new believers), Ministry Gifts, etc.*
- 4.) Relevant Classes: *Bible for Dummies, Understanding the Arts in Worship, Engaging Culture, Healing Life's Hurts.*

There are youth classes (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades) and children's classes (Pre-K, and 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Grades)

All classes are held on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am and at 10:10 am.

If you have the gift of teaching or the desire to teach and would like to be trained please contact the Life Development Department.

# ***Water Baptism***

## **Baptism – Jesus’ Command**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

## **Meaning of Baptism**

Based upon the New Testament account, **water baptism** is one’s rightful response to Christ’s command recorded in Matthew 28. While **baptism** is not the agency of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), it does serve as a significant, outward sign, or testimony, of the inward work of regeneration that occurred the instant Christ was received by faith as Savior and Lord. It speaks of obedience in one’s life. It also speaks of submission to Christ’s Lordship and leadership. Just as importantly, it speaks of unity, and commitment to His body, the church. (1Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4)

## **Mode of Baptism**

Identification with Christ in His death and burial is most clearly depicted through baptism by immersion. Being fully submersed in water is consistent with the biblical pattern of baptism in the early church, as well as Jesus’ baptism, while the coming up out of the water speaks of one’s reception and participation in the present and future benefits of Christ’s resurrection. (Romans 6:3-4)

## **Candidates for Water Baptism**

Every person who believes in Christ should be baptized (Acts. 2:41; Acts. 8:12). Many choose to repeat their baptism experience as an expression of rededicating their lives to Christ and His church.

There are three primary reasons for choosing to be baptized.

- To follow the example set by Jesus (Mark 1:9)
- Because Jesus commands every believer to be baptized (Matthew 28:19-20)
- Being baptized demonstrates that you are a true follower of Christ (Acts 18:8; 1 John 2:3)

## **Children and Baptism**

Since the biblical model for baptism clearly follows a personal decision to trust in Christ as Savior and to commit oneself to His Lordship, we choose not to perform “infant baptism”. However, dedicating a child to the Lord is a valid means of declaring God’s destiny over the child, so a dedication ceremony with family and friends is encouraged.

At Calvary, we wait until a child is old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. A parental/guardian permission slip must be signed, accompanied by a pastoral interview prior to a baptizing a minor.

## **When Should I Be Baptized?**

According to biblical accounts, there was a sense of immediacy when it came to baptism following conversion. In other words, all new believers should be baptized as soon as possible (Acts 2:41; Acts 8:35-38). There is no reason to delay. Once an individual (young or old alike) has accepted Jesus into their heart, we encourage them to seek to obey Christ through baptism at the next available opportunity. Gathering friends and family together to celebrate your baptism is encouraged. Please call the church office to obtain the date of the next scheduled baptism service.

## **Can My Family be Baptized Together?**

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It can be a wonderful expression of commitment as a family. However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This can put undue stress and pressure on them, and can serve to delay your own obedience to the Lord.

## **How Do I Schedule My Baptism Experience?**

Please contact the Assimilations Office at (407) 644-1199, ext. 222.

# Prayer

There are few statements of truth more powerful, more liberating, or more comforting than this – “God Answers Prayer!”

It is our delight and challenge to discover the spiritual dynamics of prayer. One cannot encounter a healthy, thriving church without discovering that at its root, lays a deep commitment to prayer.

Jesus prayed regularly, in fact, continuously as He walked on earth, and He taught His disciples to pray. In His position in resurrected glory, Jesus continues to pray. Why? Because the Father wants us to pray, and secondly, importune prayer brings the intercessor into an understanding of the Father’s viewpoint and purpose in a matter so that when intercession is made, there is agreement with what the Father intends.  
(Refer to 1 John 5:14)

Prayer is not our attempt to convince God about anything, or to change His mind. As Paul Billheimer has said in his book, *Destined for the Throne*, “prayer is not begging God to do something which He is loath to do. It is not overcoming reluctance in God.”

As the church learns to comprehend the mind of God through prayer, she will learn to exercise the power of agreement with Him; promoting her to the exercising of the authority she has been granted.

John Wesley said, “God does nothing but in answer to prayer.” When the church, both individual and corporate, realizes her identity in Christ as co-sovereign with the Son, she discovers that God will not go over her head to do things in spite of her. The church is the bride of Christ, and we are being trained to rule and reign with Him eternally.

The enforcement of victory via Calvary’s cross is therefore up to us. We have been given the “keys to the Kingdom” (Matthew 16:19), and our weaponry is “divinely powerful” (2 Corinthians 10:4) to disrupt, pull down, and render powerless the works of darkness.

Programs and methods of men are feeble and inadequate they relate to winning the hearts of men to God. However, prayer provides the impetuosity of God’s anointing and revelation regardless of the task.

When God’s people pray, glorious things happen!

## **Quotes on Prayer:**

*I have heard it said that if prayer is anything, it is everything.*

*Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.  
William Cowper (1731-1800)*

*The Christian on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe.  
Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899)*

*Every Christian needs a half hour of prayer each day, except when he is busy, then he needs an hour. Saint Francis of Sales (1567-1622)*

*Jesus passionately spoke to Peter, James and John on the night He was to be betrayed, "Can you not tarry with Me even one hour in prayer?" (Mathew. 26:40) Jesus went on to say, "Watch and pray lest you fall into temptation. For the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."*

**"Can you not wait with Me one hour?"**

The fact of the matter is our flesh is weak, but even in our weakness we can each spend one hour a week in prayer. Many of you will have the ability and desire to do this, and more.

**Calvary Prayer Center**

Our goal is to have one or more people praying at home or in the Prayer Center, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 9:00 pm for at least one hour per week. This amounts to a total of 60-hours of continuous prayer weekly. Because of the way the Prayer Center designed, up to seven people could be praying in it at one time. Because of this, those 60-hours of prayer could actually grow to 420 hours of prayer within the same time frame.

Calvary's future in terms of maturity, anointing, and evangelistic impact has been and will continue to be clearly reflected by our commitment to prayer.

**You are invited to tour the Prayer Center during regular office hours (Monday through Friday), to become better acquainted with the center and the Intercessory Prayer Leaders. Please call the church office to set up an appointment.**

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." *2 Chronicles 7:14*

# **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

*We believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God, equal to the Father and the Son. He was active in history as recorded in the Old Testament scripture, and He came in His prophetic fullness to the Church at Pentecost as recorded in the New Testament. He inspired the Scriptures while miraculously preserving them, and He continues to illumine and reveal the Word of God to man, while always glorifying the Son. He specifically works to convict unbelievers of their sin and their need for the Son; He is the agency in which the Son dwells within each believer initially resulting in salvation, and dynamically resulting in intimacy and identification; He sanctifies, guides, teaches, and empowers Christians to experience the vitality of the life of God, both in this world through service and community in the Church, as well as in eternity.*

*We believe in the **Baptism of the Spirit**, subsequent to conversion, which results in the release of the fullness of the Spirit, being evidenced by tongues, joy, praise and other inward and outward manifestations and gifts, each of which are to be eagerly desired, developed and exercised according to biblical pattern and instruction.*

*Please refer to these and other verses of scripture to further your own personal study: Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 1:33; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:38-39; Galatians 3:2,14; Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 5:16, 22-25; 1 Corinthians 12; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:1-4; Ephesians 5:18-20.*

The Christian life without the fullness of the Holy Spirit living through us in a dynamic and relevant fashion leaves us with futile attempts to live godly lives on our own. Daily, as the Holy Spirit is recognized and welcomed into our lives, He fills us with the very life of God producing spiritual intimacy with Him, as well as joyful submission to the Lordship of Jesus. Consequently, there will be the endowment of power by the Holy Spirit to be effective witnesses for Christ as we seek to communicate the truth of forgiveness of sin and the gift of salvation in Jesus alone.

If you would like to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, simply approach the altar during the time when the Pastor gives an invitation at the end of his message on Sunday morning. A trained Altar Prayer Minister will be available to answer questions and pray with you.

May God's richest blessings be with you as you seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Remember, the Spirit-filled life is your "birthright" in Christ.

# ***Evangelism***

***“Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.”  
Luke 19:10***

Some of the last words that Jesus spoke when He was on the earth became known as “The Great Commission” ...to go into all the world and preach the Good News to every person. For centuries, the white harvest field that Jesus told His disciples to look at was those places that were outside the doors of the Church. In fact He sent out His disciples two by two into towns, villages and cities that needed to hear that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

Currently there is a paradigm shift taking place across America. There are several reasons for this shift: People on the outside have heard the Gospel several times. Often times Christians have been branded as only being on a mission to get a decision for salvation and could care less about embracing another person for who they are. Many high profile Church leaders have failed in matters of Christian integrity and continually do so. People outside the church have become defensive and even angry at Christians. In turn, many leaders are realizing the greatest harvest field has become inside the church. When people come to church they are much less likely coming with a negative attitude. It is time for the twenty-first century Church to re-think evangelism. People are more spiritually sensitive than ever, searching for answers to their questions, looking for authentic relationships, and desirous of music and a message delivered in relevant terms.

As Christians in the congregations that are lead by the Holy Spirit actively engage with those on the outside through building authentic relationships, they are then able to invite them to a service that fits them well. This happens only when quality time is taken to develop a genuine friendship.

Calvary is “re-thinking” church so that we can be relevant to the needs in our culture. You may find in a part of a service where story-telling and one point sermons become the new way of communicating truth and the use of the Arts becomes essential in showing forth God’s creative side. Authentic relationships are what give and sustain life among everyone in the Body and personal stories become the connecting points with each other. Missional adventures in the community become the Christian way of life. This mean the old way of reaching people has ended but, it means that we are re-thinking how to utilize new and creative ways with lasting results.

Calvary Assembly offers a number of Christian Life Classes that focus on evangelism and how to relate to non believers in our culture. These include:

- 1.) On Purpose Soul Winning – Class participants are taught how to win people to the Lord through an eight lesson course.
- 2.) Different Styles of Evangelism – Various styles of evangelism are discussed and participants taught how to adapt them to different personalities.
- 3.) Love Them to Life – Students are enlightened about the three different “worlds” of people around them and how they are related to each other.
- 4.) How to Reach Different Religious Groups – Each class focuses on a different approach to witnessing to those of different faiths.
- 5.) How to Engage Culture – Through a series of dialogues, class participants are encouraged to build better relationships with those in their sphere of influence.

6.) **Belong Before They Believe** – Participants are encouraged to accept people from all walks of life and integrate them into Christian environment.

There are many opportunities to be involved in Evangelism. One of the newest ways is to be to become a Meeter. People come to church with many needs and there are always those who are looking to invite Jesus into their life. Intentional events held at Calvary such as Special Relevant Messages, Dramas, Praise Concerts, Friends Day, Senior's Day, Easter Musicals, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Water Baptisms, New Membership, Tell the Story Videos and Guest Speaker, open up huge doors for evangelism.

## ***Missions: Local, National, and International***

Calvary Assembly's commitment to missions is a ministry and financial priority. A percentage of Calvary Assembly's weekly tithes and offerings is designated to missions before any other financial commitments are met.

A Missions Committee oversees the mission activities and budget. The committee is comprised of a staff pastor as well as members of our congregation who have demonstrated a personal passion and commitment to missions.

Because the Scripture directs every follower of Christ to "be witnesses in Judea, in Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8), it is our responsibility and delight to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ locally, nationally, and internationally. Our yearly vision, goals and strategies represent this directive.

### **Local Missions Outreach**

Calvary Assembly supports dozens of local ministries in the greater Orlando area. In addition to our support and cooperative efforts with various local ministries, we also have our own local outreach ministry known as the Calvary Outreach Center.

**Calvary Outreach Center (COC):** COC is the benevolence ministry of Calvary, and it exists to assist thousands of people each year in the Central Florida area who seek our help.

Some of the goods and services provided by Calvary Outreach Center include the following:

- Food
- Clothing
- Bicycles (if needed as transportation to work)
- Small appliance repair
- Oil and filter changes
- Thanksgiving Baskets
- Christmas toys
- Financial Counseling
- Financial Aid

**Homeless/Bus Ministry:** Calvary Assembly ministers weekly to homeless individuals and families of our community. Faithful volunteers pick up many homeless individuals by bus every Sunday morning. Breakfast is served, a Bible study is taught, and all attend the morning worship service. Afterwards, a hot meal is served and a change of clothing is provided. Food for the homeless is available at Calvary Outreach Center throughout the week.

## **National (Homeland) Mission Outreach**

Calvary Assembly supports approximately 50 Home Mission endeavors within the United States. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Aged Ministers Assistance
- Bible Colleges
- Inner City Churches
- Ministries to the Blind
- Military Ministries
- Ministries to the American Indian
- Ministries to the Deaf
- Men's and Women's Ministries of the Assemblies of God

## **Worldwide Foreign Missions Outreach**

We are delighted to report that Calvary Assembly supports over 360 missionaries and ministries in approximately 50 countries of the world. Some of the countries in which Calvary Assembly sponsors missionaries and ministries include Argentina, Austria, Australia, Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Canada, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, French Polynesia, Germany, Great Britain, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, India, Israel, Lesotho, Japan, Mail (West Africa), Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, Taiwan, Thailand, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zaire, Zambia, and others

## **Short Term Mission Trips**

One of the primary objectives of our Missions Department is to facilitate mission trips to strategic locations around the world in order for our members to visit and experience the mission field for themselves. It continues to be our experience that anyone participating in a missions endeavor, will return with a new perspective and enthusiasm for what God is doing in missions. Often we will partner with Assemblies of God missionaries, or other viable mission organizations for a specific project. Potential trips are reviewed by the Missions Committee, approved by the Ministry Staff, and led by a staff pastor or lay person with prior missions experience. Each trip has specific ministry goals to be accomplished with the desire that each team be God's blessing wherever they go.

- Medical – medical doctors and dentists are organized and sent to inoculate and treat local natives in third world countries where medical facilities are not readily accessible. Prayer teams often accompany medical personnel to pray and evangelize patients while they are waiting to be treated.
- Evangelistic – may include street witnessing, children, youth, and adult crusades, accompanied by the distribution of Bibles and/or Christian literature.
- Construction – teams go for the purpose of building churches, parsonages, schools, and other needed facilities, often in remote areas.

## **Annual Missions/Week Conference**

Each year, Calvary Assembly sponsors two Missions Conferences; we do a mini conference in the Spring another in October that extends over two weekends. The purpose of these conferences is to highlight Calvary's missions program and to keep our congregation well informed with what is being accomplished through the missionaries and ministries that we support. Highlights of the week include:

- Missionaries sharing their experiences with Care Groups, Christian Education classes, and mid week services
- A report that provides detailed information on the previous year's missions program and budget. It is exciting to see how our missions dollars are used and what we have been able to accomplish for the glory of God!
- The Annual Missions Banquet which features special music and various missionaries sharing how God is using them on the mission field
- Missions Booths are set up in the Worship Center Foyer featuring various local and foreign ministries/missionaries that Calvary Assembly supports
- Sunday services in which a guest missionary challenges us to make an even greater commitment to missions and to the Great Commission

We trust that we have been able to convey in a small measure, the priority that Calvary Assembly places upon missions. It is our desire that every member catch the vision of what God is doing through Calvary in local and international missions, and become more involved.



# ***Section Four***

## ***Positional Statements***



# ***Can You Be Certain About Your Salvation?***

In the fourth letter of the New Testament, John the Apostle wrote, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32). Without truth, no one or nothing can be trusted. Life is built on trust, and trust is based on truth. Jesus said about Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

Jesus claimed Himself to be equal with God and the Savior of the world. This fact sets Him apart from every known religious leader and teacher. Neither Moses, Paul, Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, etc., ever claimed themselves to be God. This claim by Jesus to be deity and His ability to have convinced a great portion of the world is unique.

Either Jesus was telling the truth about Himself, or He was lying. Was He a liar? Was He a lunatic? Or, was He Lord? What you decide on this matter is of vital importance. Simply choosing to put Jesus on the shelf as a great moral teacher is intellectual dishonesty. For how could He be great or moral, if His teachings about Himself were delusions or outright lies?

Let's look at the facts that support His claim to be God:

- Born of a virgin
- Life lived without sin
- Able to perform supernatural works (power over disease, death, laws of nature)
- Fulfillment of all prophecies made concerning Him (over 300 references spanning 1000 years before the coming of the Messiah – all uniquely fulfilled by Jesus)
- Overcame death and the grave (bodily resurrection on the third day after the Crucifixion)
- Witnesses of His resurrection (over 500 historically credible witnesses)
- Evidence of His living today (transformed lives spanning nearly 2000 years since Jesus' birth, burial, and resurrection)
- Archaeological support (evidence of the reliability of scriptures will either be supported, brought into question due to incongruity, or denied through archaeological findings – the most recognized archaeologists of our time conclude through their findings that the Bible is historically accurate)

It has been our personal discovery, and delightfully so, that Jesus' claims of deity are true. How can we be certain? Because of what He has done to change our life, giving us purpose and a reason for living that has brought great joy and excitement. We can choose to believe that Jesus Christ is in fact whom He said He was: the Son of God, Savior and Lord. As a result, our life has been changed, and we have a living knowledge of His existence, love and power.

We urge you to weigh the evidence. Only two decisions are possible. You can either reject Jesus and His claim as Lord, or you can accept it, and receive Him by faith as Lord and Savior of your life. In choosing to accept Jesus Christ the following suggestions should be followed:

1. Know that God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life  
 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16
2. Realize that you are a part of the human race which is sinful, and cannot relate to a perfect and holy God through your own efforts.  
 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23  
 “For the penalty of sin is death.” Romans 6:23
3. Jesus Christ is God’s only provision for man’s sin.  
 “But God demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8
4. We must individually choose to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; only then can we know and experience God’s love and plan for our lives.  
 “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12  
 “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of the result of works, that no one should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

You can receive Christ and His promise of forgiveness and salvation right now through prayer. God knows your heart, so your words are not as important as the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

*“Lord Jesus, I choose to believe that what you said about yourself is true – You are the Son of God. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. By faith, I invite you into my life, right now. I repent of my sin, and ask you to be my Savior and my Lord. Thank you for forgiving me from all my sins, and thank you for giving me eternal life. Have your way in me, and make my life all that you intend for it to be. I ask these things in the name and power of Jesus Christ. Amen!”*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If so, then pray this prayer now, and Christ will come into your life just as He promised.

The Christian life is lived in the very same way that it is received: by faith. Don’t depend on your feelings to verify your salvation. Feelings can change with the weather. Our confidence is in not how good or bad we feel, but in God being faithful to His promises.

Now that you have received Christ, you have an incredible opportunity to learn more about Jesus and all that He has done in your life. The best place to grow in your faith is to attend the Foundations Class on Sunday mornings (refer to the Christian Life Classes flyer for the time and location of classes). Here you will discover along with other Christians who have recently accepted Jesus, how to grow as a new believer in Christ.

Please call Calvary Assembly of God, (407) 644-1199, at your earliest convenience. We will rejoice with you in your decision, and offer suggestions to help you connect in a class with fellow Christians who are excited about their new-found life in Christ.

# ***Biblical Correction: Procedures for Church Discipline***

*“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.” Proverbs 3:11-12*

Anytime disciplinary procedures through biblical means are called for in the church, the purpose is to be redemptive and restorative. Overlooking sin in the body is sin itself, as well as attempting to administer discipline out of unforgiveness, anger, or revenge. There are many in the Body of Christ who are sick, in broken fellowship, or living in denial because local churches have not chosen to be responsible in teaching or applying biblical disciplinary procedures toward those in sin. God corrects His children (Proverbs 3:11-12) because He loves us. So too are we to correct one another when we are living in sin, yet through a spirit of love and restoration.

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

Biblical teaching is clear regarding the need for discipline and correction, and the steps to be taken are as follows (refer to 1 Corinthians 5; and Matthew 18:15-17)

1. When you know that an individual has committed or is committing sin without repentance, it is your responsibility to go to that person and confront their sin in a spirit of love and restoration.
2. If the person refuses to confess the sin, repent, and take appropriate steps to bring about reconciliation, then you are to take two or three witnesses from the church to confront the person's sin once again.
3. If the person still refuses to confess and repent, and take appropriate steps to bring reconciliation, then they are to be brought before the church. We interpret this step to involve the Elders of the church. Should it be deemed necessary, the Elders will determine if, when, and how to communicate this information to the congregation.
4. If the person refuses to confess, repent, and take appropriate steps to bring reconciliation, then he/she will have the fellowship of the church removed in a public setting until such time as it takes true repentance to be evidenced in the heart of the offender and the process of restoration committed to.

While God's love and forgiveness is to permeate our relationships, a spirit of permissiveness is not conducive with God's character. He loves us, but He is also serious about sin. So serious was He that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die a cruel death on the cross taking the penalty of sin upon Himself. May we each determine to live our Christian lives, understanding the great cost that was paid for our salvation in a manner of honesty, humility, accountability, and love.

*“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” James 5:16*

*“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” 1 John 1:8-10*

## ***Statement on Christian Giving (Biblical Stewardship)***

The principle of Christian tithes and offerings is to be viewed and understood from God's perspective. He created all things, therefore all things belong to Him (Psalm 24:1; 1 Chronicles 29:14). As recipients of His benevolence and grace, we have the privilege and the responsibility of being His custodians.

God's plan of economy begins with His giving of Himself. Giving is God's nature, and so it stands to reason that His created order has the principle of giving woven into its very fabric. God's cycle of health and sufficiency is therefore dependent upon circulation. In God's order, accumulation does not result in true wealth as the world practices, but it is in giving (Luke 6:38; Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:10). Just as God delights in giving (John 3:16), so we are to give out of a cheerful heart (2 Corinthians 9:7, 8).

In Old Testament times, God's people were required to contribute at least a tenth of their income to God's work (the tithe). Although the New Testament is not explicit about the continued validity of the standard, it may be assumed that it endorses the practice of tithing as a minimum guideline or a starting point for Christian giving. Obviously, the New Testament lays demands upon believers that exceed the giving of the tithe.

According to the New Testament, the totality of one's possessions belongs to God—not just the tithe (Matthew 6:19–34, 19:16–30, 25:14–30; Luke 9:23–25, 12:13–34, 16:1–13, 18:18–30, 21:1–4; Acts 2:44–45, 4:32–37). The New Testament allows Christians to keep the portion of their income which is necessary to provide for them and their dependents so that they do not become a burden on society (1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; 1 Timothy 5:8; 6:6–10). But, the balance of their income is to be used for God's work and for deeds of charity (2 Corinthians 9:6–15; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17–19; James 2:15–16; 1 John 3:16–18).

Thus, whereas the Old Testament required the contribution of only a tenth of one's income to God's work, the New Testament requires the total disposition of one's possessions for God's work, except for that portion which is to be kept to provide for oneself and one's relatives with reasonable safeguards for the future. On this basis, if a tenth of one's income is sufficient to provide for one's own family needs, the remaining ninety percent belongs to God's work.

This approach to giving reflects the radical transformation of pagan materialistic values that takes place under the impact of the Gospel as the quest for personal advantage gives way to the desire to worship God through total disposition of oneself to His service and to the service of others (Romans 12:1). The expansion of the old covenant standard of tithing into the principle of total giving provides an explanation for the relative silence on this issue of tithing in the New Testament. The implications of the New Testament principle of total disposition reduces tithing to a beginner's exercise, a minimum reference that is to be increased in proportion to one's income and one's growth in Christ.

To ensure the proper functioning of the ministries of the local church, it is appropriate for a body of believers to expect that, apart from other giving, at least a tenth of their constituents' income be contributed to the local church that serves them. Both the Old and New Testament offer warrant to uphold such a standard (Leviticus 27:30–32; Malachi 3:10;

Matthew 23:23). The New Testament enjoins believers to support generously the ministry of their local church (1 Corinthians 9:11–14; Galatians 6:6).

According to the New Testament, the responsibility for the proper apportionment of a believer's giving is a matter of individual conscience rather than a function of the body. However, the church is to exercise watch and care over its constituency to protect it from the sin of greed which is cause for church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:10–11; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5).

When Christians learn to regard the totality of "their" possessions as belonging not to themselves, but to God, they develop a joyful sense of freedom from the instinct of possessiveness. They view their possessions as divine entrustments placed in their care for the purpose of ministry. As a result, their giving is not based on legalistic calculations of grudgingly accepted impositions. It becomes the spontaneous heart response of grateful spirits answering cheerfully and generously to God's love. The biblical measure for giving is to be found in a grateful heart, not in the devices of an electronic calculator (Acts 20:35).

# ***Baby Dedication***

## **Why Dedicate a Baby?**

Biblical history is replete with dedications of many kinds. When a parent or guardian (often times accompanied by family and friends), dedicate their baby to the Lord, they are commissioning their personal care, training, love, and discipline of the child in order to “raise up the child in the way it should go” (Proverbs 22:6), thus enabling the child to move toward his/her God-given destiny. This is a dedication, not a baptism. Baptism is reserved for those who have willfully acknowledged Jesus as Savior and Lord, and want to declare their decision publicly through immersion by water.

The truths and symbolism that we recognize in dedicating children are:

1. While a child is born by natural parents, the life of every living creature is granted under the jurisdiction of a Sovereign God.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” Jeremiah 1:5

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:13-16

2. God has a divine plan for the child's life.

“before you were born I set you apart” Jeremiah 1:5b

3. Our commitment to the Lord as guardians is to entrust this child to the care and plan of Almighty God. “From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.” Psalm 22:10

## **How Can I Dedicate My Baby?**

Please call the Children's Ministry Office at (407) 644-1199, ext. 278 to schedule a dedication service with your family and invited friends.

## ***Statement on Women and Men in Ministry***

We believe the Bible teaches that men and women were created by God and equally bear His image (Genesis 1:27). God's intention was for them to share oneness and community (Genesis 2:23–24), even as the Godhead experiences oneness within the Trinity. Each had a direct relationship with God and they shared jointly the responsibilities of rearing children and having dominion over the created order (Genesis 1:26–28). However, human oneness was shattered by the fall.

God has acted in Christ to redeem the human race, and to offer to all people the opportunity to be part of His family, the Church. It is God's intention for His children to experience the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son (John 17:11, 20–23). This means that old divisions and hierarchies between genders and races are not to be tolerated in the church, where all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

In the formation of the church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on women and men alike, as had been predicted long before the coming of Christ (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:18). In the New Testament, women as well as men exercise prophetic and priestly functions (Acts 2:17–18, 1 Corinthians 11:4–5, 1 Peter 2:9–10). Further, the Spirit bestows gifts each one, without giving anyone preferential treatment based on gender (Acts 2:1–21, 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Every believer is to offer her or his gifts for the benefit of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4–8; 1 Peter 4:10–11). To prevent believers from exercising their spiritual gifts is to quench the work of the Spirit.

In all attempts to understand and put into practice appropriate relationships between genders in the Body of Christ, our sole authority is the will of God as expressed in Scripture. While value, esteem, and giftedness are equal for all before God, there is a consistent pattern in scripture regarding authority.

In matters of the home, specifically the husband and wife relationship, there is equality before God. Yet in function as understood within the realm of God-given delegated authority, the man is head over the wife (Ephesians 5:23). The man and woman are one in Christ and equally valued, yet in function, one is head over the other. This pattern can be clearly seen in the function of the Trinity, as Jesus submitted to the Father. Likewise, in the church, final authority and oversight is delegated through biblical pattern to godly, and mature men. In direct application of this principle here at Calvary, final authority rests with the Elders.

## ***Statement on Divorce and Remarriage***

Because marriage has been established by God as an indissoluble union and since it is an earthly copy of the relationship between Christ and His church, it is to be kept inviolate. However, because of the fallen-ness of human nature, the Scriptures permit divorce in the following cases as an accommodation to human sin for the protection of innocent party:

1. Divorce for the cause of immorality—with the understanding that the obligation to maintain or reinstate the marriage may not be imposed upon the innocent spouse. Matthew 19:9
2. Divorce for desertion—desertion being defined as behavior equivalent to the abandonment of the marriage relationship. I Corinthians 7:15

In such cases, the innocent spouse is not bound. He or she is free to remarry in the Lord (though the seeking of repentance and reconciliation should always be the first recourse).

The remarriage of believers may not be approved when:

1. Divorce is being used as a vehicle to seek a different mate, since such pre-intent makes the divorce adulterous.
2. There is no evidence of repentance and brokenness over the circumstances that cause the divorce.
3. Restoration of the original marriage remains a viable option. It is understood that the concerns above do not apply to divorces that have occurred before conversion.

Each case of divorce and/or remarriage has to be dealt with on an individual basis from the perspective of God's inexhaustible capacity to forgive human sin and to restore broken lives.



