

## INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the Pastor's Inquirers' Class. This class is for you if you are interested in membership at Redeemer Church or just interested in finding out more about the church. Also, you may find it helpful to go to our website: [www.redeemerjackson.com](http://www.redeemerjackson.com) or the website of the Presbyterian Church in America: [www.pcanet.org](http://www.pcanet.org). Both of these will assist you in learning more about this particular church and our denomination. My prayer is that our time together will be beneficial as you seek God's will regarding church membership.

### Schedule and Course Topics:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. How Do You Become a Member of Redeemer Church?<br>(The Gospel & Membership Vows-How Do You Join Redeemer?) | Page 2<br><b>September 18</b> |
| 2. What Do Presbyterians Believe? (Sacraments)  | Page 9<br><b>September 25</b> |
| 3. What Do Presbyterians Believe? (Theology)  | Page 8<br><b>October 2</b>    |
| 4. What Is a Presbyterian Anyway? (History and Practice)  | Page 19<br><b>October 9</b>   |
| 5. What Is a Presbyterian Anyway? (Government/Role of Women)  | Page 21<br><b>October 16</b>  |
| 6. What Makes Redeemer Different? (Vision Part 1 )  | Page 25<br><b>October 23</b>  |
| 7. What Makes Redeemer Different? (Vision Part 2 )  | Page 27<br><b>October 30</b>  |
| 8. How Do You Get Plugged In? (You Have Something to Offer)   | Page 31<br><b>November 6</b>  |
| 9. How Do You Get Plugged In? (Opportunities to Serve)  | Page 43<br><b>November 13</b> |
| 10. Question and Answer Session (Panel Discussion)  | Page 48<br><b>November 20</b> |
| 11. Meeting with Elders/Testimonies/Questions and Answers   | <b>November 27</b>            |
| 12. Meeting with Elders/Testimonies/Questions and Answers   | <b>December 4</b>             |
| 13. Presentation to Congregation and Membership Vows  | <b>December 11</b>            |

## Welcome to the PASTOR'S INQUIRERS CLASS

■ Redeemer's Website: [www.redeemerjackson.com](http://www.redeemerjackson.com) ■ Presbyterian Church in America's Website: [www.pca.net.org](http://www.pca.net.org)

■ Schedule and Course Topics

### HOW DO YOU BECOME A MEMBER OF REDEEMER CHURCH?

**One must first be a member of Christ before one is a member\* of the visible expression of Christ's body! There is a real danger in putting cart before the horse!**

**Elbert's personal testimony - memorizing EE verses and became converted! Seminary friend converted in seminary!**

#### • Jesus' Words

*"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Mt 7:22-23)*

#### Paul's Words

*• For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Ro 9:6-8)*

#### Subtle Danger

Proximity to Christ (or participation in church events) does not equal personal relationship. •  
Knowing about Christ (facts or even scriptures) does not equal knowing Christ

**Therefore, the first calling upon on us all (before joining the church) is to ensure that we are Christians!**

\* Children of believing parents are considered non-communing members.

#### The Problem

**If we were to take an honest look at ourselves, others around us and the world at large, we can easily see that something is desperately wrong!**

**We attribute the evil of this world and within our own hearts to sin and the Fall (Genesis 1-3). God created all things seen and unseen and it was all originally "very good."**

*31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Genesis 1:31*

**Every since the beginning, mankind has been trying to "save" itself!**

Adam & Eve hid from God, and tried to cover themselves with leaves. Their attempt at covering or fixing their problem of nakedness and alienation from God.

*"And they sewed together, for themselves, fig-leaves as loincloths." Genesis 3:7*

We have all tried to "hide" or "earn" God's favor. Good behavior? Church Attendance? Good deeds outweighing the bad?

**It is impossible for us to save ourselves and restore fellowship with God!**

*21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law (or law-keeping), then Christ died for no purpose. Galatians 2:21*

**What exposes the problem?**

**The law of God is like a light that shows us the sin hidden in our hearts!**

**Imagine walking into a darkened room, which appears clean.**

But, after turning on light, and grabbing a broom, you soon discover that there is dust everywhere. The dust has always been there, but the light and the broom expose and disturb it. Pilgrims Progress. A dusty Parlor. Large parlor. Man called to sweep. Christian almost choked to death. Interpreter says, "Dust is your sinfulness. Broom is the law."

### **The Law of God is good!**

*12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (Ro 7:12)*

### **The Law of God exposes our sin!**

*Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. (Ro 7:7-8).*

*Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. (Ro 7:13-14)*

### **Our problem is bigger than we'd like to think! A spiritual death has occurred that will lead to a physical and eternal death.**

*"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." Ephesians 2:1-4*

### **Our problem isn't the sins we commit but our very natures that are corrupted! (See above)**

*3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Psalm 51*

### **There is none righteous, no not one. (Romans 3:23)**

*Not a racial problem, class problem, or a problem with temperament. The ultimate problem is our sinful nature. The wages of sin is death! (Romans 6:23)*

### **The most important words in all of the Bible! "But God..."**

### **We believe that God intervened and took the divine initiative to do something on our behalf!**

*4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ Ephesians 2:4-5*

### **Notice what Paul teaches us about the very character of God?**

*Rich in mercy*

*Great love with which he loved us*

*There is a corporate aspect to God's love (He loves his church collectively) There is also a personal aspect to God's love!*

*Galatians 2! "Christ loved me and gave himself for me!"*

*According to one Neil Anderson, "Mental Health experts have said that if people knew they were loved and forgiven, half of the mental institutions and prisons would be empty."*

### **Notice when Paul God's love and mercy is given?**

*When we "cleaned ourselves up" and then came to God? No! Certainly Not!*

*"Even when we were dead in our trespasses and sin" he made us alive!*

### **The Good News is that God is rich in mercy, abounding in love and delights to rescue men and women from his own wrath, for his own glory!**

### **How does God rescue us and show us his abundant mercy and love?**

**Through the sending of his only begotten son, who had enjoyed eternal fellowship with the Triune God!**

John 17:5 "Glorify me with the glory I had with you before the foundation of the earth!"

John 1:1-14 "In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, the word was God...and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, sent from the Father, full of grace and truth"

Timothy 2:5-6 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. Mediator, Fully God truly man.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**Jesus would perfectly obey the Father (righteous) throughout his entire earthly life!**

But, his reward for this was death? How? Why? The wages of sin is death. Why then did a righteous man die? For us! IN our place!

**How is the work of Christ credited to us?**

**By our works? No!**

20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20

yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law...Galatians 2:16

Paul has to speak to this in many letters because it is a fundamental shift from the way our world operates!

**But by grace? God's unmerited favor!**

By grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8

**For by grace you have been saved through faith.** And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:5-9

Salvation is a gift from God, to us! It cannot be earned, we do not deserve it!

**Through Faith!**

Turning from sin and self

Turning to Christ as life, hope and righteousness!

**How does God view us? • Righteous (perfect in his sight through the works of Christ)**

• 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

**New Heart**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

**Forgiven (sins atoned for)**

**New Help(er)**

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (Jn 14:25-26).

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

Christ does not only save us, but promises to seal and make his dwelling with us, that we might persevere!

**Those who will one day be fully glorified that we might be with and like Christ!**

• 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified **he also glorified.** (Romans 8:28-30)

• **Sons and daughters, engrafted into the family of God!**

## WHAT MORE DOES THE GOSPEL PRODUCE? COMMUNITY

- ▶ An embracing community (*reflecting the grace of God in Christ*)
- ▶ A godly community (*lovingly encouraging one another to live lives pleasing to God*)
- ▶ An honest community (*free to repent and free to allow others to repent because of Christ*)
- ▶ An edifying community (*that builds one another up*)
- ▶ A serving community (*that engages in the lives of others*)

## 4 WAYS TO COME INTO MEMBERSHIP (Each requires a credible profession of faith.)

- Profession of Faith—First-time public profession of faith
- Reaffirmation of Faith—Reaffirming one's faith without a letter of dismissal from another congregation
- Letter of Transfer—Member of another congregation that will issue a letter of transfer or dismissal
- Associate Membership—Believers temporarily residing in a location other than permanent homes may become associate members without ceasing to be communicant members of their home church. Cannot vote in congregational meetings or hold office in the church

## VOWS OF MEMBERSHIP (Each member must affirm the following five vows of membership.)

Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?

Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

## COMMUNING & NON-COMMUNING MEMBERS

- Communing Members—those who have made a profession of faith and been admitted into full communing membership by the Session (board of elders)
- Non-communing Members—children of communing members who have not made a public profession of faith and thus have not been brought into the full membership of the church. Therefore, non-communing members are not admitted to the Lord's Table and cannot vote.
- Communicants' Class—This is a new members' class for children ranging in age from 9-13. This class is for non-communing members who have a credible profession of faith and are ready for communing membership. It is also for the children of those transferring from other churches and whose children are members of those churches (up to 13 years old). If your child is 14-18, please speak to the pastor and a communicants' class will be arranged for this age group.

## 2. WHAT DO PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE? (Theology)

**DEFINITION:** William Edgar, in his book, Truth in All Its Glory: Commending the Reformed Faith writes, “So, then, what is the Reformed faith? It is a particular account of God and the world. Historically, as the name indicates, the Reformed faith was forged at the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Yet its central teachings are not meant to be innovative. The Reformers contended they were going back to the roots, representing not only the historic position of the church but also the contents of the Scriptures, as God’s Word.” He goes on to write, “So, what is Reformed theology? What does it mean to adhere to the Reformed faith? Is there one all-encompassing summary of the Reformed outlook? To make such a claim runs the danger of paring everything down to an abstraction and forgetting the riches and depth of our faith.” **But there are some important themes that stand out.**

### THEMES OF THE REFORMED FAITH:

Basic Christianity – Reformed Christianity is part of a much larger body of believers who love and serve Jesus Christ. As such, we hold many things in common with other Bible believing Christians. These include such doctrines as the trinity, the true deity and true humanity of Jesus Christ, the necessity of Jesus’ atonement for sin, justification by faith alone, the need for the new birth (regeneration), the church as a divinely ordained institution, the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the requirement that Christians live moral lives, the personal visible return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the body, the Great Commission, etc.

The Doctrine of Scripture – The reformed commitment to Scripture stresses the Bible’s inspiration, authority, and sufficiency. Since the Bible is the Word of God and so has the authority of God Himself, reformed people affirm that this authority is superior to that of all governments and all church hierarchies. The sufficiency of Scripture means that it does not need to be supplemented by new or ongoing special revelation. The Bible is the entirely sufficient guide for what we are to believe and how we are to live as Christians. The Reformers, and particularly John Calvin, stressed the way the objective, written Word and the inner, supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit work together, the Holy Spirit illuminating the Word to God’s people.

The Sovereignty of God – For most the chief and most distinctive aspect of reformed theology is God’s sovereignty. Sovereignty means rule, and the sovereignty of God means that God rules over His creation with absolute power and authority. He determines what is going to happen, and it does happen (Job 42:2-“I know that yYou can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.”; Psalm 115:3-“Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.”). God is not alarmed, frustrated, or defeated by circumstances, by sin, or by the rebellion of His creatures. God is sovereign over this world and over our salvation.

The Kingdom or Cultural Mandate – Reformed theology also emphasizes the cultural mandate, or the obligation of Christians to live actively in society and work for the transformation of the world and its cultures. There is general agreement on two things. First, we are called to be in the world and not to withdraw from it. We long for God’s Kingdom to reign in this world. Second, we are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner. We, therefore, are concerned for justice and mercy in our world.

The Doctrines of Grace – Reformed theology emphasizes the doctrines of grace, best known by the acronym TULIP. In 1610, just one year after the death of James Arminius (a Dutch seminary professor) five articles of faith based on his teachings were drawn up by his followers. The Arminians, as his followers came to be called, presented these five doctrines to the State of Holland in the form

of a “Remonstrance” (i.e., a protest). The Arminian party insisted that the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism (the official expression of the doctrinal position of the Church of Holland) be changed to conform to the doctrinal views contained in the Remonstrance. The Synod of Dort in 1618 reaffirmed the position of the Reformation which was put forward by John Calvin. The synod formulated its Five Points of Calvinism to counter the Arminian system.

### 5 Points of Calvinism

#### Total Depravity

*The unregenerate can never do anything to satisfy God’s standards of righteousness, and in fact, do not even try (Psalm 58:3, Romans 3:9-12, 8:7-8). As opposed to the view that man, although affected by the Fall, is not totally incapable of choosing spiritual good, and is able to exercise faith in God in order to bring himself into possession of salvation.*

**Romans 3:9-12:** “What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’ ”

#### Unconditional Election

*Salvation begins with God’s choice of us and not our choice of God (John 15:16, Acts 13:48, Romans 8:28-30). As opposed to the view that God predestines those individuals who He knew – or foresaw – would respond to the gospel.*

**John 15:16:** “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.”

#### Limited Atonement

*Christ’s death was a real atonement for the specific sins of his people as a result of which they are truly saved. It was not merely a general atonement that makes salvation possible but actually saves no one (Matthew 1:21, 20:28, 1 Timothy 1:15). As opposed to the view that Christ died to save all men but only in a potential fashion. Christ’s death enables God to pardon sinners, but only on condition that they believe.*

**Matthew 20:28:** “...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

#### Irresistible Grace

*The Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ (Ezekiel 11:19, John 6:29, 37, 44, 63-66, Acts 16:14). As opposed to the view that the Holy Spirit, as He begins to work to bring a person to Christ, can be effectually resisted and His purposes frustrated.*

**John 6:44:** “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

#### Perseverance of the Saints

*None of those called by God and redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ will be lost (John 10:27-29, Ephesians 1:5, 13-14, 2 Timothy 4:18). As opposed to the view that a saved man can fall finally from salvation.*

**John 10:27-29:** “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

### The Importance of the Doctrines of Grace (from “Faith Unfolded” by Jim Osterhouse):

It reveals the depth of God’s great love for us (He loved the unlovable).

It reveals the power of love in our lives (our love is a result of God’s grace).

It reveals the motive for our good works (gratitude for what God has done).

It reveals the source of our knowledge (not human wisdom or power but by God’s Spirit).

It reveals the nature of our security (eternal and unshakeable).

### 5 Points of Arminianism

#### Free Will or Human Ability

*The unregenerate can never do anything to satisfy God’s standards of righteousness, and in fact, do not even try (Psalm 58:3, Romans 3:9-12, 8:7-8). As opposed to the view that man, although affected by the Fall, is not totally incapable of choosing spiritual good, and is able to exercise faith in God in order to bring himself into possession of salvation.*

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#### Conditional Election

*Salvation begins with God’s choice of us and not our choice of God (John 15:16, Acts 13:48, Romans 8:28-30). As opposed to the view that God predestines those individuals who He knew – or foresaw – would respond to the gospel.*

**John 15:16:** “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.”

#### General Redemption

*Christ’s death was a real atonement for the specific sins of his people as a result of which they are truly saved. It was not merely a general atonement that makes salvation possible but actually saves no one (Matthew 1:21, 20:28, 1 Timothy 1:15). As opposed to the view that Christ died to save all men but only in a potential fashion. Christ’s death enables God to pardon sinners, but only on condition that they believe.*

**Matthew 20:28:** “...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

#### Human Resistance to Grace

*The Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ (Ezekiel 11:19, John 6:29, 37, 44, 63-66, Acts 16:14). As opposed to the view that the Holy Spirit, as He begins to work to bring a person to Christ, can be effectually resisted and His purposes frustrated.*

**John 6:44:** “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

#### Falling from Grace

*None of those called by God and redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ will be lost (John 10:27-29, Ephesians 1:5, 13-14, 2 Timothy 4:18). As opposed to the view that a saved man can fall finally from salvation.*

**John 10:27-29:** “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

It reveals the depth of our joy (“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!”).  
 It reveals the breadth of our comfort (We are loved and held by the Father).  
 It reveals the firmness of our confidence (“In all things we are more than conquerors....”).  
 It reveals the cause of our boldness in witness (the results belong to God).  
 It reveals that we were chosen for a purpose (to bring Him glory by doing His will).  
 It reveals that all the glory goes to God (Salvation is totally a work of God).

#### WHAT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (P.C.A.) BELIEVES:

- ▶ We believe the Bible is the written word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and without error in the original manuscripts. The Bible is the revelation of God’s truth and is infallible and authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.
- ▶ We believe in the Holy Trinity. There is one God, who exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ We believe that all are sinners and totally unable to save themselves from God’s displeasure, except by His mercy.
- ▶ We believe that salvation is by God alone as He sovereignly chooses those He will save. We believe His choice is based on His grace, not on any human individual merit, or foreseen faith.
- ▶ We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who through His perfect life and sacrificial death atoned for the sins of all who will trust in Him, alone, for salvation.
- ▶ We believe that God is gracious and faithful to His people not simply as individuals but as families in successive generations according to His Covenant promises.
- ▶ We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells God’s people and gives them the strength and wisdom to trust Christ and follow Him.
- ▶ We believe that Jesus will return, bodily and visibly, to judge all mankind and to receive His people to Himself.
- ▶ We believe that all aspects of our lives are to be lived to the glory of God under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

#### SUGGESTED READING LIST:

Experiencing the Truth: Bringing the Reformation to the African-American Church by Anthony Carter, Ken Jones, and Michael Leach published by Crossway Books

Faith Unfolded: A Fresh Look at The Reformed Faith by Jim Osterhouse published by CRC Publications

On Being Black and Reformed: A New Perspective on the African-American Christian Experience by Anthony J. Carter published by P & R Publishing

Putting Amazing Back into Grace: Who Does What in Salvation? by Michael Horton published by Baker Books

The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented by David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas published by P & R Publishing

The Journeys of 10 African-Americans into Reformed Christianity edited by Anthony Carter published by Crossway Books

Truth In All Its Glory: Commending the Reformed Faith by William Edgar published by P & R Publishing

When Grace Comes Home: How the Doctrines of Grace Change Your Life by Terry Johnson published by Christian Focus Publications



### 3. WHAT DO PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE? (SACRAMENTS)

The Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 27:1 says, “*Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace....*” As a sign they are visible tokens of the invisible grace of God’s covenant. The idea of a seal is that of a sign that conveys the authority of the author. The two sacraments are baptism and the Lord’s Supper

1. Baptism – Our Distinctives

- a. Mode: The mode employed is that of pouring, because the primary purpose of baptism is to represent the outpouring of the regenerating and cleansing Holy Spirit.

*The Westminster Confession of Faith* states, “Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person.”

Theologian John Murray says, “We are led to the conclusion that though the [Greek] word ‘baptizo’ and its cognates can denote an action performed by immersion yet they may also be used to denote an action that can be performed by a variety of modes.”

The apostles adopted the metaphor of baptism because the sight of water being poured over the heads of converts was common. Thus because baptism was a pouring, it was common to speak of the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ and the ‘outpouring’ of the Holy Spirit interchangeably.

- b. Subjects of Baptism: DVD-“*Why Do We Baptize Our Infants*” by Dr. Richard Pratt
- c. Further Reading: “*Why Do We Baptize Infants?*” by Larry Edison and excerpt from “*Baptism*” by Francis A. Schaeffer (pages 11-19).

2. The Lord’s Supper – The Presence of Christ (“*This is my body*” and “*This is my blood*”).

- a. The bread and wine are the physical body and blood of Christ (Catholicism’s transubstantiation).
- b. The bread and wine contain the physical body and blood (Luther’s consubstantiation).
- c. The bread and wine represent the body and blood (Zwingli’s Memorial).
- d. The bread and wine contain spiritually the body and blood (Calvin’s real spiritual presence).— PCA Position

# WHY DO WE BAPTIZE INFANTS?

BY LARRY EDISON

(Covenant Life Presbyterian Church)



## PREFACE

### **Psalm 22:9-10**

*"Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. [10] From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God."*

What does God say about children? Too many times we are concerned with what other people say, what churches say, or what tradition has said. The ultimate issue has to do with how God says to treat your children.

## INTRODUCTION

The Bible rings with the theme of *family* all throughout its pages. God has a pattern of operating with, and working through families. The Bible presents a picture of two types of families; those who belong to Him, and those who are part of the world. Out of these two categories of families, which are those who are His? Are they just the adults? Are they just those who are old enough to profess faith in Christ? Of course not. His people have always included parents (adults) together with their children. His people have always included singles, babies, grandparents . . . all who have joined themselves to the Lord's visible community, or are children of those who are part of His family.

This family theme has never changed since the dawn of history. But, what does it mean? Well, let's take a look. It means that God's blessing is given to adults who believe, together with their children. This is the way God has always acted in the world – *parents together with their children*, either in blessing or in judgment. Let's look at the way this pattern works.



## BIBLICAL CONSISTENCY

### ***Parents Together with Their Children: Judgment According to Families***

Consider the Garden of Eden at the dawn of history. Adam and Eve sinned against God and were punished for their rebellion. They were exiled from the garden (Gn. 3:21). But what about their children? If God treated each person simply in accordance to what they had or had not done, then where would we expect the children to be raised? Certainly it seems the children were innocent or, at least, not accountable for sin. Yet, they were all raised outside the garden. The children felt the consequences of their parents' sin. The children, we might say, were punished, not for what they had done, but for what their parents had done! Is this fair? Yes, when you consider that God always deals with *parents together with their children*.

What about Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn. 19)? It was the adults who were committing such gross sin. Yet, when God rained down fire from the heavens, it was the entire city (families; *parents together with their children*) who suffered the consequences.

When God was battling the false gods of Egypt with the Ten Plagues (Ex. 7-11), it was all the Egyptians who

suffered, even to the loss of their firstborn children. It was not just those of the age of accountability, or those who had sinned, who were punished. Every family in Egypt, except for the people of God, felt the death of their firstborn.

When God rained a flood of judgment on creation (Gn. 6-9), it was not just the immoral who suffered and were drowned. It was parents, grandparents, children, and yes, even infants, who faced the judgment and wrath of God. Why? Because God dealt according to this principle: *parents together with their children or households*.

We conclude therefore, that God generally deals with families as a whole. This isn't too unusual. Where do we get our values? Where do we get our basic training? Where do we learn about basic relationships? Growing up in a family, of course.

### ***Parents Together with Their Children: Blessing According to Families***

The Bible clearly says that Noah was a righteous man (Gn. 6:9). Yet is it Noah and his entire family who were saved from destruction at the time of the flood.

Certainly the people of Israel were not a model of virtue or faith at the time of the Exodus. But God saved *parents together with their children* as they crossed through the Red Sea and were fed manna and quail by the grace of God.

This picture of God bringing His people (parents, children, grandparents, healthy, unhealthy, etc.) through the Red Sea is picked up by Paul (1 Cor. 10) as a picture of redemption. Notice the analogy Paul makes. He says that the people who came through the Red Sea were baptized into Moses. In other words, they were *glued* to Moses, and as long as they were stuck with Moses they were safe. If they abandoned Moses, then they were doomed. This experience, being called a baptism, is comparable to baptism into Christ. In baptism, we are treated as disciples. As long as we stick with Christ, like glue, we are safe. If we abandon Christ, we are doomed. Now, think who was baptized into Moses – it was *parents together with their children*. It was parents and little children who were carried across to freedom. The same pattern can continue today. Children of believers are baptized, and as they stick with Christ, they continue to be blessed. But if they (or we adults) abandon Christ, they will be doomed.

### ***The Holy Spirit Can Break the Cycle of Parents Together with Their Children***

It is important to understand that God is calling people from the world to Himself. Therefore, it is the Spirit Himself who, many times, breaks this cycle of *parents together with their children*. For example, there are many people who have been raised apart from Christ, but later have come to trust Christ as Lord and Savior. This is why we do evangelism. This is why the Holy Spirit has come (Acts 2) as a missionary Spirit. He causes people to defect from the world and to come to Christ. . . . even people who were not raised in Christian homes. It is these people who we would baptize as adults.

Yet, if this family pattern is the way God generally works, if God calls both parents together with their children to Himself, how can we deny these children of believers the sign of God's promise – the sign that they are to be counted and treated as part of God's covenant family?

### ***The Sign of God's Ownership: God's Claim Branded on His People***

Let's go back and look at the way God claimed ownership of adults as well as their children. Abraham is the classic example as well as the beginning of God's move to gather together an entire nation of people.

God calls Abraham to Himself in Genesis 12. Abraham's response is one of *trust and obedience*. Abraham be-

believes God and follows His commands. In that chapter as well as in Genesis 15, God promises Abraham three things:

1. He will become a great nation (in other words, Abraham will have plenty of descendants).
2. This great nation would have a land.
3. The people of Abraham (the people of God) living in the land would be a means of blessing to all the nations of the earth. In other words, God was calling Abraham to Himself, and in doing so would ultimately achieve His goal of blessing people from all nations (see Gn. 12:1-3 and 15:12-17).

In Genesis 17:3-8, when these promises were confirmed again, God gave Abraham a sign of that promise as a means of encouragement (just like our wedding rings today). The sign was the cutting of circumcision (17:10). All baby boys were to be circumcised at eight days old as a sign God had claimed ownership of these children. This means, before the infants were old enough to know what was happening, and before they had any choice or say in the matter, God claimed these little ones as His. They were to grow up, walk with the Lord, and inherit the covenant promises for themselves (see Gn. 18:19).

Quite interesting is the statement (Gn. 17:14) that if there was any uncircumcised male, that person was to be kicked out of the covenant community (the church of the Old Testament). No one had this idea that children were to be brought up neutrally. Everyone understood that children were to be brought up in the instruction and discipline of the Lord (see Deuteronomy 4:9 and 11:19-21). Why? Because the children of believer's belonged to God as much as the parents belonged to God. These little children were God's and therefore they were to be treated as disciples who needed to grow up learning about the Lord and learning how to properly respond in faith to His work of grace.

Notice what Malachi (2:15) says about these children. They are called *holy* because God wants godly offspring. The children of believers (even one believer according to 1 Cor. 7:14) are claimed by God and therefore designated as holy. Holy means that they are separated for a special purpose and they are on God's side. They are NOT:

1. Neutral or unaccountable until a certain age.
2. Heathens or part of the world.

These children of believers are considered part of God's family, and therefore given the sign of circumcision. Circumcision did not make someone a child of God, if so, baby girls would be left out. Rather, circumcision functioned like a *brand*. It was a picture or a sign of God's ownership, and was designed to make Israel think of themselves as owned by God. This is no different than a wedding ring. The ring is a sign that shows how people are to be treated, it does not make someone married. The one with a ring is treated as *unavailable* to others because of the unique relationship he or she is already in.

Consider how God worked with Abraham. The insight we gain in Romans (4:11) is fascinating. The text says, much like the Baptist view of *believer's baptism*, that Abraham received:

Romans 4:11

*"... the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well."*

Abraham first believed, and then was circumcised. This is the pattern of Baptist churches which is *believe and then be baptized*. Seems like this circumcision was only proper after Abraham believed. But remember Genesis 17? This same circumcision, which for Abraham was appropriate only after he believed, was also a sign for children, and for all who came after, at eight days old . . . before they believed! You see the pattern here: *parents together with their children*. The circumcision never represented Abraham's faith any more than baptism represents the faith of an individual. Circumcision represented the seal of righteousness God credits to those who belong to Him. In the same way baptism represents the work of Christ credited in our behalf. Both are appropriate for adults as well as our children.

Look at another similarity between baptism and circumcision (in case you think I am picking the ideas out of

thin air). In Colossians 2:11, Paul addresses gentile believers;

*“In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ . . .”*

Paul reminds these Christians that they have been circumcised. Yet, these are gentiles, they have never been circumcised. Well, that’s right. He goes on to say it was a circumcision which was not done by men, but by Christ. There are two problems here:

1. How can a person be circumcised if not by the hands of another person?
2. How could Christ circumcise anyone at this point in time? He has ascended to the throne of heaven and physically circumcises no one.

Let’s keep reading. This was accomplished when these gentiles were baptized.

Col. 2:12

*“. . . having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”*

Those who have been baptized are, from an Old Covenant perspective, those who are circumcised. Both of these signs are the *seal and sign* of God’s ownership. The meaning of baptism and circumcision are virtually the same. Both are signs of God’s promise, and both are signs designating who should be treated as part of the family of God.

Certainly there is a difference. Circumcision was a bloody sign looking forward to the coming of Christ. Baptism uses water to picture what Christ has done on the cross and by His Spirit. But both were used as a sign to separate the people of the world from the people of God . . . externally though, because no one can read the heart.

Clearly then, the sign of membership in the earthly family of God was to be placed on infants. Christ Himself was circumcised on the eighth day. We’ll talk more about this under the *objections* section.

Where in the New Testament has any of this changed (*parents together with their children*)? It is just the opposite. The pages of the New Testament are replete with these same ideas of *parents together with their children* and with the idea that children of believers are included in the church. Let me give a few examples. I’ll discuss the idea of *household* (*parents together with their children*), then examples of Christ and infants, and finally a concluding passage which addresses the place of children.



## LOOKING AT RELEVANT PASSAGES

### **The Household Mentality Continues Throughout the New Testament**

Look at the explanation of the events which occurred on the Day of Pentecost. Peter tells the crowd that the promise is for “*you and your children*.” This is a *household* mentality, or a family perspective. The same language is used by Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians (1:16) where Paul refers to baptizing the *household* of Stephanus. This *household* language is also used twice in Acts 16 (vss. 15, 31) in reference to families coming to Christ and being baptized. Now, what’s the point? Is it that there must have been infants in the homes? No, that’s not the point. The point is from Acts 2 and throughout the book of Acts, the *household* language and mentality continues. God has not stopped operating on the basis of *parents together with their children*.

Even in reference to the conversion and training of Timothy, we are reminded that his faith lived in his grandmother and then his mother (2 Tim. 1:5). God blessed this household so Timothy continued in this way of *parents together with their children*.

### **Notice the Way Infants and Children of Believers Are Treated**

Fascinating that in Ephesians 6, Paul addresses the children. The children are considered as part of the church, God's covenant family. The Bible does not only address adults, but children as well. Why? Because as disciples, they must grow up walking with Christ (even as their parents).

Luke 18:16 records the blessing of Christ given to the children. Notice the text says that parents were bringing their infants (the word *brephe* is not simply child, but breastfeeding infant). It says of these children that they are a part of the kingdom of heaven. There are people who would argue that not the children, but only the adults who respond to Christ as a child are part of the kingdom. But how silly of Christ to say that NOT these children, just their parents (if they receive the kingdom as a child) will be counted as kingdom citizens. Of course, this is not the case. Jesus is saying that both the adults who believe, and their children, have a part in the kingdom. These were the children of believers who are blessed by Christ. What other type of person would ask Jesus to bless their children?

### **Children of Believers: God's from Conception**

A fascinating passage from the Psalms puts all of this together in regard to our understanding of what God says about our children.

Psalm 22:9-10

*"Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God."*

When does the baby become God's child? From the time of conception God has claimed this child as one of His own. Who is this child? It is the child of a believer. Does that mean this child does not have to grow up believing? Of course not. It means just the opposite. As a covenant child, this infant must be taught about the Lord so as the child grows, he/she will know nothing but faith in Christ. This pattern is only logical. Think of the way a child is raised. Does that child have to grow up, and for the first time, decide if he/she loves his/her parents. Of course not. Now, as the child grows, that child will have a variety of emotions, and along the way make constant decisions about the way he/she will deal with his/her parents. But no parent looks for a first time commitment out of that child to love, respect and honor their parents. That attitude is nurtured and fostered all throughout childhood. The same pattern holds true in our relationship with God. There is a fostering and nurturing of the childlike faith through covenant training.



### **SUMMARY**

Why then do we baptize the children of believers? We baptize them for these reasons:

1. They are already claimed by God as belonging to Him. Those who belong to Him should be baptized.
2. They are considered as holy, and part of God's church. Those who are part of His church should be baptized.
3. These children are counted as disciples, and the disciples of Christ ought to be baptized.

Baptism is a sign of God's claim, and it is a sign for those who are part of the church. Someone who belongs to God and to the church ought to receive the sign of baptism, because it is baptism which is the symbol that marks out a difference between the people of the church and the people of the world.



## COMMON QUESTIONS, OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS

### **Is Baptism a Guarantee of Salvation?**

Apart from Christ, there is no guarantee of salvation. The only way to have assurance of salvation is to be in Christ. Neither water baptism nor church membership guarantees a place with Christ for all eternity. Salvation is accomplished by the work of the Spirit. This is symbolized in baptism, but not accomplished by baptism. We cannot read what is in the heart of others. We do not know what God has done or will do in someone's heart. We can't tell if a child or an adult is elect or born again. If we try, that is treading on territory reserved for God alone. On the other hand, we operate on the basis of what God says. This means counting or treating our little ones as part of the church.

Baptism is a sign of what God says about the way we are to treat our children. We have said all along that baptism is a picture of the way we are to treat people. A wedding ring does not *make* someone married; it is a picture or sign of an already existing marriage relationship. In the same way, baptism does not make someone a Christian, nor is it intended to show what is happening in someone's heart. Baptism is a picture of what God says about the baptized person. In line with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19ff), those who are baptized are counted and treated as disciples. Nothing more and nothing less.

### **Are There Other Options for Salvation?**

There are plenty of people who believe that children and infants are not accountable to God for their sin until the age of accountability. The fact that this phrase is not in the Bible does not bother these people (even though they would use this line of reasoning against the infant baptism position). We do not believe in salvation by innocence. We believe salvation is only by the grace of God in Christ. We believe that all people are sinners – even children. All are sinful from birth (Ps. 51:5), and certainly are accountable to God for sin.

What is the only reason people die? Romans 6:23 tells us it is because death is the wages of sin. Why then are children allowed to die? From God's perspective it is because there are none who are innocent. All people are born sinners and therefore all suffer the consequences for sin. This is why little children grow up to be big sinners. Adults just act out what they are in their hearts, and what is in the hearts of all people from birth.

This is why Jesus had to be conceived by the Holy Spirit – otherwise, like the rest of us, He would have been conceived in sin. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and not in the normal human fashion. All people ordinarily conceived are conceived in sin. If Christ would have been conceived in this way, He could not have been qualified to be our Redeemer. So He was conceived miraculously in order to be that sinless Substitute-Redeemer.

We cannot believe in salvation by infancy as though infants, if they die, go to heaven because they are innocent. If this were the case, the best evangelistic tool would be to kill all infants to insure they will go to heaven. Otherwise, they might grow up, and being another religion, die eternally for their sin. We would never want to say that infants are saved because they are infants. Salvation is only in Christ, not because of age.

How can we believe children are not accountable to a perfect and holy God? We must believe that all people are accountable to God at all times. It is for this reason that Christ died for adults and also for our infants. The blessing He gives is gracious; God will be merciful to us and to our children as well.

### **The Idea of Believer's Baptism**

Is there really such a thing as *believer's baptism*? Can anyone really practice *believer's baptism*? I don't think so. No human being can ever tell if someone else is born again. None of us can tell if another person is genuinely converted. We can only see, or not see, evidence. We might be able to see or not see fruit, but we can make no certain judgments. Therefore we treat adults on the basis of their profession of faith. We don't baptize on the basis of what is happening in the heart. We baptize because of what is said from their lips. We baptize if someone has a credible profession of faith, not because someone is a believer. No one can truly practice *believer's baptism* because we have no access to someone else's mind and heart. As a result, we should quit talking about "*believer's baptism*" as though the church can baptize because they know whether one is converted. We let our assumptions about *believer's baptism* cause us to think that those we baptize really have been converted and therefore ought to properly receive the sign of baptism. We are mistaken into thinking that adult baptism guarantees baptizing only those who are truly converted. We should talk about how God wants us to deal with people . . . especially our smallest people, our children.

Remember in Acts 8 (verse 13, 23) the baptism of Simon? Here is a man baptized as an adult, on the basis of his profession of faith. Yet, from the warning and admonition of the apostles, it seems as though this man's heart was never right with God. No one can ever be certain if the one being baptized is a Christian. Therefore, from a human perspective, this is irrelevant. The only important fact is what God says we should do. We then baptize adults on the basis of what they say, and we baptize children on the basis of what God says about them.

### **"Repent . . . (Then) Be Baptized"**

As with Abraham who had to believe and then was circumcised, this is the proper model for an adult conversion. But again, as with Abraham, his children were circumcised, and so also can our children be baptized.

We must realize that, for the most part, the sermons in the book of Acts are addressed to adults who were listening. The very context is an address to adults, and is not a universal statement about how all people always are redeemed. If this were the case, then those who cannot repent and then believe would be condemned to an eternity in hell. This would include not only infants, but those who are mentally impaired as well (whether from birth or from an accident). Keep in mind that the New Testament was written at a time when there was an earth-shaking change regarding the transition from the Old to the New Covenant. All believers in Christ were basically first-generation believers. It is to these first generation believers that most of the New Testament was written. Therefore, we would expect most of the language to be addressed not only to adults, but to first-generation believing adults. The model for a first-generation Christian is repentance and then faith, rather than being nurtured in the faith from childhood.

The Great Commission is a perfect non-adult model. According to this text, we are called to make disciples. This is a two-step process in which we are to "*baptize them . . . teach them.*" We can baptize our children, and then teach them all the Lord has commanded. This model fits the infant baptism model perfectly. We treat our children as disciples who are part of the church (baptized) and teach them all the Lord has commanded. So we start reading the Bible stories to them when they are small. We pray with them and teach them how to pray. We are to have devotions so they learn how to worship. I could continue, but enough is said in showing how we treat our children as disciples who are also in training.

### **Christ Was Baptized When He Was 30 Years Old. Doesn't That Prove Adult Only Baptism?**

If the Baptists use this argument, then they prove too much. If this really were the pattern for baptism then no one should be baptized until at least age 30. At the same time, are people really saying that Christ was not converted until He was older? Of course not. Jesus was circumcised at eight days old, attended the Passover regularly as a covenant child, and baptized at the age of 30 according to the pattern of all the priests of the Old Testament who were entering the public priesthood (see Numbers 4:3,23,30,43).



This baptism at age 30 was not a Christian baptism. Christian baptism had not even been instituted and Christ had not completed His work. This is a pre-Christian baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (see Mark 1:4).

### **How Do You Explain Apostasy?**

To phrase the problem another way, some people object saying, “We can’t baptize an infant because they might grow up and abandon the Lord.” In one sense there is no explanation for how one can turn their back on Christ. This is no different than the enigma of Adam and Eve’s sin. How can anyone who knows God turn their back on Him? There are explanations, and certainly there are passages which explain this phenomenon (1 John 2:18-19; Mt. 13:18ff; Mt. 7:22-23). But this is not an issue about baptism. There are adults who abandon the Lord, and there are children who grow up in the church and, by all appearances, abandon the Lord. This raises no more difficulty for the *infant* baptism position than for the *adult-only* baptism position.

To withhold baptism from infants because of what might happen is like saying parents should withhold gifts to their children because their children might grow up and squander those gifts. We are to treat these children of believers as disciples, not treat them in accord with our worst fears.

### **Do You Only Baptize Children?**

No, we also baptize those adults who have never been baptized, and who articulate a profession of faith in Christ. Adults who have not been brought up in the way of the Lord are baptized when they profess Christ as Lord and Savior and join the church.

### **Conclusion**

When we come to Christ, we give ourselves wholly to the Lord. We offer God our mind, our heart, our job, our possessions, all we have and all we are. In the same way, we are not to withhold our own flesh and blood. We offer our children to the Lord. Why? Because God wants us to dedicate them to Him? No, that is not the case. They already belong to Him. We offer God our children because the children of believers are already claimed by God.

They are to grow up as disciples. If we treat them as heathen, they will probably live up to that expectation. If we treat them as disciples, and see our task as nourishing, training and loving them, then we can expect them to continue in the things they have learned.

Whose children do we baptize here? We baptize the children of those who have professed faith in Christ and are members in good standing of the church.

**EXCERPT FROM BAPTISM**  
**BY FRANCIS A. SCHAFER**  
**(PAGES 10-11)**

The Jew living in the early New Testament days would know something further. He would know that in the Old Testament there were two great ordinances – the Passover and Circumcision. 1 Corinthians 5:7,8, as well as the fact that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper at the time of the Passover meal, makes it plain that the Lord's Supper took the place of the Passover. Colossians 2:11,12 and the other facts which we have considered make it evident that baptism took the place of circumcision.

These things all being so, it would be impossible for the saved Jew not to expect that, as in the Old Testament the Covenant sign was applied to the believer's child, so also the sign of his faith, baptism, should likewise be applied to his child. Why should he expect less in this dispensation of fullness than he would have possessed in the Old Testament era?

**New Testament Practice**

These questions would be further aggravated by what this saved Jew himself would have heard taught in the New Testament time. For example, he would have heard Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:38,39: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Remember, Peter said this to Jews, Jews who were used to having the outward sign of their faith applied to their children.

With all these things in his mind, he would expect his child to be baptized. If it were refused, what would you have done in its place? You would have asked the Apostles the reason why. So would the thousands of Christian Jews in that day. The question would have been asked in a hundred meetings; and Peter, John, Paul and the others would have sat down and written in their Epistles to clear up the matter, just as they answered other questions that arose. The New Testament would have contained the clear answer as to why in the Old Testament the Covenant sign was applied to the infants of believers, but in the New Testament it was to be withheld from them.

The only reason possible for the New Testament not dealing with this problem is that the problem did not exist. The only possible reason that there was no problem in the Jews' mind was that the believing Jews did apply the Covenant sign to their children. They baptized their babies as they had circumcised them in the Old Testament dispensation.

In the light of the teaching of the whole Bible, for us not to baptize babies there would have to be a clear command in Scripture not to do so. Instead of that, the emphasis is all the other way. Of the seven cases of water baptism mentioned in the New Testament, three were of families. Someone may say, "But it does not say that there were infants involved." I would point to you that in the light of the natural expectancy of the saved Jew, if babies were not baptized, the Scripture would have made it clear that such was the case. God deals with families in the O.T. and the N.T. too. The promise made to the Philippian jailor, Acts 16:31b, "And thou shalt be saved, and thy house," adequately shows this. No matter what interpretation we, individually, may hold concerning this passage, certainly God here does show that He deals with families not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well.

Let us never forget, God's use of signs is found in every era. He gave Noah the rainbow. He gave circumcision and the Passover to the Old Testament Jew. He has given the visible church in this age the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The dispensational change from Circumcision to Baptism is no more than that of the change from the seventh day to the first as the day of worship.

#### **4. WHAT IS A PRESBYTERIAN ANYWAY? (HISTORY AND PRACTICE)**

##### **Highlights:**

- ▶ Presbyterianism emerged in the 16th century Reformation.
- ▶ John Calvin, the Reformed leader in Geneva, concluded that Jesus Christ himself is the sole ruler of the church and that he exercises that rule through officers.
- ▶ When Calvin's Genevan church order was carried to Scotland by John Knox, it evolved into the Presbyterianism that, in essentials, is still practiced today.
- ▶ The Westminster Assembly, held in London at the behest of the English Parliament (1643 - 49), produced doctrinal and ecclesiastical standards (the Confession along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms) that have been foundational for Presbyterians.
- ▶ Many Presbyterians came to America from England in the "swarming of the Puritans" to New England.
- ▶ The first presbytery was the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1706. The Synod of Philadelphia adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as the doctrinal standard of American Presbyterianism in 1729. The first General Assembly met in July 1789.
- ▶ The Presbyterian Church in America was organized at a constitutional assembly in December 1973. It separated from the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) in opposition to the long-developing theological liberalism which denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the inerrancy and authority of Scripture.
- ▶ The Presbyterian Church in America has a strong commitment to evangelism, missionary work at home and abroad, and to Christian education. From its inception, the church has determined its purpose to be "faithful to the Scriptures, true to the reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission."
- ▶ The PCA Ministry Buildings in Lawrenceville, GA, are the location from which most of the ministries of the denomination are coordinated. These ministries are carried on by four Program committees - Mission to the World (MTW), Mission to North America (MNA), Christian Education and Publication (CE&P), Reformed University Ministries (RUM or RUF), and one service committee, the Administrative Committee, responsible for the administration of the General Assembly. Additionally, there are five agencies which also minister to the denomination: PCA Foundation, PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc. (both located in Lawrenceville), Ridge Haven, (the PCA conference center located close to Rosman, North Carolina), Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, and Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, (the national educational institutions of the PCA).
- ▶ Redeemer Church became a particular church in the PCA in February of 2005.

#### **DISTINCT EMPHASES WITHIN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

##### **1. Historical/Doctrinal Emphasis**

- ▶ Emphasis on historic Presbyterianism and its theology (Puritanism and Scottish and Southern Presbyterianism)

##### **2. Pietistic/Renewal Emphasis**

- ▶ Emphasis on grace and faith including both personal and church renewal (an emphasis on the practical outworking of justification and sanctification and being in union with Christ)

### 3. Culturalist/Transformative Emphasis

- Emphasis on being missional and engaging culture with a concern for shalom and the good of communities and culture (an emphasis on God's kingdom)

#### **"The PCA Pastoral Letter on Racism" approved by the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in June 2004:**

##### **God calls us to repent of the sins of our history.**

Both the Northern and Southern Presbyterian traditions, out of which most of the founding congregations of the PCA came, allowed extensive propagation of error and confusion on the matter of race. Through both verbal and written statements these errors were freely presented not only as pragmatic realities, but also as sanctioned by Scripture: that certain races are inherently inferior to others; that slavery is justified; and that segregation based on race is justified, even if forced by law or institutionalized. The Southern Presbyterian tradition, in particular, publicly promulgated views of this nature to such an extent that they are inseparably identified with the teaching of the Presbyterian Church in the minds of many. Thus the Presbyterian Church failed to stand for biblical truth in these matters. Even where the official positions of the church did not reflect racist views, the silence of many in the church allowed the free expression of racist sentiments that were then perceived as the official position of the church.

One of the express motivations for the founding of the PCA was a desire to be the continuing Presbyterian Church. The founders of the PCA sought to establish a church in continuity with past biblical Presbyterianism, the distinctives of which were being eroded by non-biblical and even anti-biblical liberal theology. PCA founding leaders articulated the entirely positive and biblical motivations of preserving the inerrancy of Scripture, reaffirming the reformed system of doctrine and moving ahead boldly to fulfill the Great Commission. Since we are a product of this expressed intention to be the continuing Presbyterian Church, it is crucial that we repent of those teachings and actions in our history that are sinful, make a clear break from them and establish a new beginning in obedience, by God's grace. A number of biblical texts present examples of such repentance. Daniel 9:4-19, Ezra 9:5-8, Nehemiah 9:5, 33-35, Luke 11:46-51.

For years we have left unattended in our midst the vestiges of racism, and the reality of its raw presence within corners of our denomination. We have been comfortable to let our brothers and sisters of races other than Caucasian quietly acquiesce to our unwillingness to make changes on their behalf, in contrast to Christ's laying down His life for us. We repent of our offenses against our brothers and sisters in Christ. Both as individuals and together as a church, we are compelled by the Gospel to repent of racism in our own hearts and in our actions, and we are compelled to commit ourselves to wrestle against it personally and publicly. We repent of our sins of omission and commission in this area. We confess that we do not have the strength to overcome the power of racism and that we need Christ to be our Rock in this struggle. We confess that we do not know how to be the New Community of God's People, and we confess our inadequacy to reflect the Gospel as it will be expressed in its fullness in Heaven. Yet, notwithstanding our inadequacies, we commit to seeking the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit, believing in the sufficiency of His sanctifying power to transform us, and we commit ourselves to follow that leading as we, in cooperation with other branches of Christ's universal Church, pledge ourselves to ministry among every nation, tribe, people and language, both in North America, and in all other regions of the world.

**Additional Reading:** Pamphlet on the "*Presbyterian Church in America*" (included in notebook)

## 5. WHAT IS A PRESBYTERIAN ANYWAY? (Church Government)

- I. Forms of Church Government: The main forms of government in different denominations are the following:
  - A. Episcopal or Hierarchical Form of Government (Anglican/Episcopal, Methodist, Catholic): The word “episcopacy” comes from a Greek word in the New Testament (episkopos) which came to mean “bishop.” Its distinguishing mark is the hierarchy (or rank) of church-officers; bishops, priests and deacons.
  - B. Congregational or Independent Form of Government (Baptists, Congregationalist, Non-denominational, Charismatic/Pentecostal): The congregational form of government is democratic. Power rests solely in the local body of baptized believers. Also, congregational churches believe that the local church is sufficient to itself, and each local, independent Church is solely responsible to Christ the Head. Local churches may seek voluntary associations with other local churches in councils, conventions, or other such voluntary assemblies.
  - C. Presbyterian or Representative Form of Government (P.C.A./Redeemer): The word “Presbyterian” is the English transliteration of the Greek “prebyteros”, which can mean “elder” in the sense of officeholder. Presbyterianism is simply rule by elders.
- II. Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America: *“The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, which is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word Of God, consists of its doctrinal standards set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Book of Church Order, comprising the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline and the Directory for Worship; all as adopted by the Church.* (taken from the preface to “The Book of Church Order”)
  - A. The Westminster Standards: The PCA has made a firm commitment on the doctrinal standards which had been significant in Presbyterianism since 1645, namely the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*. These doctrinal standards express the distinctives of the Calvinistic or Reformed tradition.
  - B. The PCA maintains the historic polity of Presbyterian governance set forth in *The Book of Church Order*, which consists of three sections following a theological preface: the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline, and the Directory for the Worship of God
- III. Three Guiding Principles for the Formation of a Presbyterian Form of Government:
  - A. Parity: All elders are equal in position and authority.
  - B. Plurality: The local church is led by more than one elder.
  - C. Diversity: There is one office of elder but two types – teaching and ruling.
- IV. The Duties of Elders: To watch diligently over the flock committed to his charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples.
- V. The Duties of Deacons: To minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation.  
  
**\* The Presbyterian Church is governed by spiritually qualified elders and served by spiritually qualified deacons both chosen by the people.**
- VI. Presbyterian Connectionalism: Presbyterians are connected or bound together by a common government. This allows for mutual accountability, dependency, and submission among churches. This connectionalism has worked itself out in Presbyterian church history in terms of a gradation of three levels

of court jurisdiction:

- A. The local session – this is the board of elders elected by the congregation with oversight of the faith and life of the local congregation.
- B. The presbytery – composed of representatives from the sessions (ruling elders) and the ordained ministers (teaching elders) of the churches in a prescribed geographic area, which meets at designated times and exercises oversight over, coordinates the work of, and gives advice and counsel to the several local churches in its area of responsibility. Our presbytery is called the Mississippi Valley Presbytery.
- C. The general assembly – composed of ruling elder representatives and the ordained ministers (teaching elders) of all the presbyteries, which meets annually and enables all the churches to have a voice in guiding the spiritual and practical affairs of the church in a region or country.

VII. Who Can Hold Offices in the Church?: The Book of Church Order says the following: “Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be *an active male member* who meets *the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1* (bold italics mine for emphasis).”

IX. Biblical Evidence:

- A. Overarching Principle 1: Male and female possess spiritual equality before God.
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **Genesis 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- B. Overarching Principle 2: This neither annuls nor devalues the different roles of each in the family and church
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 3:1** Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives-<sup>2</sup> when they see your respectful and pure conduct.
  - The Analogy of the Trinity (Ontological Equality; Functional Subordination)
- C. The Office of Elder:
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 5:22** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.<sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Timothy 2:11** Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.<sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.<sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve;
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Timothy 3:1** The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.<sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,<sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.<sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,<sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.
- D. The Office of Deacon:
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 16:1** I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a *servant* of the church at Cenchreae,
  - <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Timothy 3:8** Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.<sup>9</sup> They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.<sup>10</sup> And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they

prove themselves blameless.<sup>11</sup> *Their wives* likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.<sup>12</sup> Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.<sup>13</sup> For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

## **X. The Role of Women in the Church**

- Men and women are both created in the image of God.

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

- Men and women have equal value in the eyes of God.

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

- Men and women have different roles in the family of God.

**Genesis 2:18** – “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a **helper** fit for him.’”

**Creation Design** - The creation design of women is that of an ‘ezer’ (Gen. 1:18). This term is defined as a strong ally, one who comes alongside, helper; one who is called to someone’s aid; one who advocates for another; comforter.

This is a description God uses of Himself in His role as He comes alongside His people in both the Old and New Testaments.

**Ps 54:4** – “Behold, God is my **helper**; the Lord is the upholder of my life.”

**Ps. 118:7** – “The Lord is on my side as my **helper**; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.”

**Heb. 13:6** – “So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my **helper**; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’”

**Complimentarian view of women** - God has created men and women equal in their essential dignity and human personhood, but different and complementary in function this is reflective of the Trinity (*Ontological Equality; Functional Subordination*) where each person of the Trinity is fully God so equal in nature but different in role and function; the Father chooses, the Son redeems, the Spirit regenerates.

**John 14:16** – “And I will ask the Father and He will give you another **Helper** to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth...”

**John 14:26** – “But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

**John 15:26** – “But when the **Helper** comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Who proceeds from the Father, He will Bear witness about Me.”

## **Opportunities for Women in the Church**

**Primary Purpose:** to come alongside the Session and church to help accomplish the overall mission and vision of the local church **Means to Accomplish the Purpose:**

- **local church opportunities:**
  - serving on the committees of the church Administration, Worship, Shepherding, Missions (*Local, Home, World*), Christian Education, Youth and Children, Church Planting serving in Mercy Ministries of the local church (*assisting with mercy needs for both those within the congregation and those who are not members but come to the church for help*)
  - serving in Worship Support Ministries (*music, ushering, greeting, worship response team, technical support*)
  - serving on the women’s ministry leadership team helps oversee ministry TO women and THROUGH women -helps connect women to:

- **The Lord** – prayer, discipleship, study of His Word
- **The Church** – locally, presbytery level, nationally
- **One Another** – through prayer, discipleship, and ministry together
- **The Community** – serving those both inside and outside the local church through existing ministries of the church as well as developing new ministries based on particular calling and giftedness and the needs presented

#### **Opportunities Beyond the Local Church to Assist the PCA Denomination at Large**

- **presbytery opportunities**
  - presbytery women’s ministry team—purpose is to help connect women from all PCA churches within the presbytery
- **national opportunities**
  - women’s international, national, and regional conferences
  - women’s leadership training
  - women’s national ministry team
  - regional advisors
  - Trainers
  - advisors to permanent committees of the General Assembly



## **6. WHAT MAKES REDEEMER DIFFERENT? (VISION, PART 1)**

### **VISION**

*“A Community Church for the City”*

Redeemer Church, PCA, is a multi-ethnic community of Christians committed to glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and proclaiming the Good News of His Kingdom both in word and deed to the Broadmoor/Broadmeadow neighborhoods, the city of Jackson, and the world.

### **VALUES**

1. Dependency on the grace of God with a desire to glorify God (*our power and focus*).
2. Creating an intentionally multi-ethnic church with a specific desire to reach the ethnic and socio-economic demographics of our city.
3. Biblical, contextualized, Reformed Worship.
4. Christ-centered preaching and teaching of the Bible.
5. Responsible witness in our community, city, nation, and world.
6. Holistic community-focused ministry.
7. Model the love of God in real relationships with one another and with those God places in our lives.
8. Multiplication of the Kingdom and the vision that God has given us.
9. Developing leadership for the future.
10. Strengthen families through instruction, example, service, and healthy church life.
11. Stewardship of God’s time, energy, personnel and resources, making disciples of all people groups.
12. Network with others in the Body of Christ who share the same hope in Christ and the same passion for world evangelization.

***To see our vision and values implemented the following must be understood:***

- I. The Missional Church: We use this term about ourselves to emphasize the essential nature and mission of the church as God’s called and sent people. Jesus told his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you (John 20:21). The church’s role is to go and make disciples. We don’t just send people to the mission field; we ourselves are sent.
  1. A missional church must be contextual (incarnational with the unchanging truth of the gospel in a specific context).
  2. A missional church must be intentional (in all areas of ministry).
    - Try to keep the focus on the gospel.

- Try to always look both outward and inward.

OUTSIDE OUR CHURCH	INSIDE OUR CHURCH
<b>Transfer Growth:</b> Outsiders who are growing, healthy Christians. These need to become involved in the church. <i>[Other churches, colleges, seminaries]</i>	<b>Discipleship Growth:</b> Insiders who are growing, healthy Christians. These need to grow further and develop their gifts for service. <i>[Non-communing/communing members]</i>
<b>Conversion Growth:</b> Outsiders who are not yet Christians or who are unhealthy Christians. These need to receive Christ and/or become involved in the church. <i>[Non-believers of all ages]</i>	<b>Renewal Growth:</b> Insiders who are not yet Christians or who are unhealthy Christians. These need to repent and/or come to genuine commitment to Christ. <i>[Attendees, non-communing, religious Church People]</i>
<b>(Extensive Growth)</b>	<b>(Intensive Growth)</b>
*taken from Reformed University Ministries	

- Try to speak in the vernacular.
- Try to be a witness everywhere.
- Try to model the counter cultural nature of the kingdom.
- Try to develop strong evangelism, mercy, missions, and discipleship ministries.
- Try to continually connect to the broader community.
- Try to always be mindful of people's souls.
- Try to always see yourself in a context.

## 7. WHAT MAKES REDEEMER DIFFERENT? (VISION, PART 2)

### II. The Multi-ethnic Church

1. What does Scripture say?
  - All people have a common origin in the creation of the universe by God (Gen. 1-3)
  - The Table of Nations signifies the importance that God places upon all people (Gen 10)
  - Abraham was to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12, 17, 22)
  - Commands even concerning the stranger in Israel (Num. 15:14-16, Deut. 10: 18-19)
  - The nations are within the sphere of God's activity (Is. 2:2-4)
  - The temple was to be a "house of prayer for all the nations" (Is.56:7, Mk. 11:17)
  - God is king of all the earth (Ps. 47:8)
  - At Pentecost in Acts 2 Babel is essentially undone, as "each one heard (the disciples) speaking in his own language.
  - The Book of Ephesians (Paul's understanding of God's universal mission and the mystery of the Gospel making Jew and Gentiles one)
  - The Church as the Body of Christ, the physical presence of Jesus in the world (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, 1 Pet. 2 and 4)
2. Definitions:
  - Paul Hiebert (late missiologist of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School): "A multi-ethnic church is a church in which there is 1) an attitude and practice of accepting people of all ethnic, class and national origins as equal and fully participating members and ministries in the fellowship of the church; and 2) the manifestation (or visible demonstration) of this attitude and practice by the involvement of people from different ethnic, social and national communities as members in the church.
  - Roger Greenway (Missionary in Residence of Calvin Seminary): "A multiethnic congregation obviously is composed of members of different ethnic backgrounds. But more than that, a true [multi-ethnic] congregation blends distinctive elements of various ethnic traditions in such a way that no single tradition predominates or suppresses the others. Nor is the outcome such a mixture that nobody can tell one element from another."

	ASSIMILATED MULTI-ETHNIC CONGREGATION	PLURALIST MULTI-ETHNIC CONGREGATION	INTEGRATED MULTI-ETHNIC CONGREGATION
ORGANIZATION CULTURE	Reflects one dominant racial culture	Contains separate and distinct elements of all racial cultures repre- sented in the congrega- tion	Maintains aspects of separate cultures and also creates a new cul- ture from the cultures in the congregation
ETHNICITY OF LEADERSHIP (LAY OR CLERGY)	Dominant race	Representative of the different races in the congregation	Representative of the different races in the congregation
DEGREE OF SOCIAL INTERACTION ACROSS RACES	Can be high or low	Low	High

3. Characteristics of Multi-ethnic Congregations: (United By Faith by Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim)
4. How do we do this?
  - i. Keep the gospel first
  - ii. Establish a clear vision
  - iii. Know the community/city
  - iv. Be intentional
  - v. Contextualize Worship
  - vi. Diverse Leadership
  - vii. Purposeful ministries
  - viii. Deliberate Interactions

### III. Reformed Contextualized Worship (Getting worship right is hard.)

- a. The Regulative Principle: In its simplest form the regulative principle states that the Bible must determine the way we worship. <sup>ESV</sup> **John 4:22** “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.” <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and *truth*, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and *truth*.” We must worship God in truth, according to His self-revelation. Calvin argued that “lawful” worship is that which He has established “by Himself.” He called for “the rejection of any mode of worship that is not sanctioned by the command of God.” Our confession puts it this way in chapter 21:1: “But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.”
- b. Positives of the Regulative Principle:
  - It can guard the integrity of worship.
  - It can keep worship Biblical.
  - It can keep worship Christ-centered.
  - It can produce worship that is acceptable to God
- c. Potential Negatives of the Regulative Principle:
  - “The challenge is to decide what [the Bible] says.” William Edgar from Truth In All Its Glory
  - It can deny cultural influence in worship.
  - It can easily become regulated by a certain tradition more than regulated by the Word.
  - It can be used to justify a certain style, culture, or preference
- d. A Helpful Distinction:
  - Elements verses Circumstances - Elements are those Biblical essentials of worship that can be derived from Scripture either directly or by good and necessary inference. The Book of Church Order 47-9 says, “The Bible teaches that the following are proper elements of worship service: reading of Holy Scripture, singing of psalms and hymns, the offering of prayer, the preaching of the Word, the presentation of offerings, confessing the faith and observing the Sacraments; and on special occasions taking oaths.”

- Circumstances are those aspects of public worship that reflect the culture in which the worship takes place. This acknowledges the liberty that Scripture grants and within these bounds rest such matters as style of music, the times of worship, liturgical style, etc. The Westminster Confession 1:6 says, "...There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed."

*\*There is sin in all cultures and common grace in all cultures.*

- We should look first to the Bible but also realize that the cultural context of our community and the historic tradition of our church will shape our worship.
- "Worship should acknowledge the context in which it takes place. The concern is not to make worship relevant, and therefore interesting or useful. Neither is it to set an agenda for worship based on current events. Rather, we recognize that it is always a particular people with particular joys and concerns who gather for worship. They live in a particular community.... They inhabit a moment in history which must be taken seriously. Our devotion to God cannot be abstracted from the social, political, economic, and cultural setting in which we find ourselves. At the same time, worship must not compromise the 'otherness' of the church. To acknowledge a context is not to bless it. By declaring the Lordship of Jesus Christ, worship denies the ultimacy of other sovereigns. By affirming the faithfulness of God, worship declares other securities to be inadequate. By anticipating God's future, worship exposes the limits of progress and prosperity. By participating in the praise which is offered in every language, in every land, by every tribe and race, worship reveals the scandal of all dividing walls. The local congregation is a mission outpost. Missionaries must be skilled at contextualizing the Gospel. If that does not happen in worship, it is not likely to happen anywhere else." – When It's Time to Change Worship by John Middleton
- What does this practically mean?
  - i. Inclusion of various styles of music (gospel, Scripture songs, choruses, RUF songs, traditional hymns)
  - ii. Inclusion of various instrumentation
  - iii. More freedom in worship ("Amens," louder singing, hands raised, clapping as appropriate, some individual movements, choir swaying – Ps. 47:1, 1 Tim. 2:8, Rev. 5:12, 2 Sam. 6:16)
  - iv. Decent and in order (1 Cor. 14:40 - Limits defined both naturally and explicitly)

3. Racial Reconciliation: Principles of Biblical Reconciliation:
  - a. Call: We are all called to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation, but some with a special call to minister in diverse situations.
  - b. Commitment to Relationship: Reconciliation is built upon the foundation of committed relationships that will persevere, ensuring that conflicts are resolved. This results in the maintenance of a reconciled relationship.
  - c. Intentionality: Intentionality is the purposeful, positive and planned activity that facilitates reconciliation.
  - d. Sincerity: Sincerity is the willingness to be vulnerable including self-disclosure of feelings,

attitudes, differences and perceptions, with the goal of resolution and building trust. A willingness to take risks through sincerity and transparency which is essential to establish and maintain a foundation of trust.

- e. Sensitivity: Sensitivity is the intentional acquisition of knowledge in order to relate empathetically to any diverse situation, person, place or organization. The principle of sensitivity recognizes that people are generally ignorant of the dynamics that cause walls of division in any situation. The question: "Help me understand?" is the key to unlocking the door of knowledge and understanding.
- f. Sacrifice: Sacrifice is the willingness to relinquish an established status or position to genuinely adopt a lesser position in order to facilitate diverse relationships. Humility demands that we place the interest of others above ourselves. "Humility enables unity, and unity affects everything."
- g. Empowerment: (2 Definitions of the word: 1. to give somebody power or authority; 2. to give somebody a sense of confidence. The word is used in the second way here). Empowerment is the use of repentance and forgiveness to create freedom in relationships. When we take responsibility and a willingness to yield, we create an atmosphere of reconciliation.
- h. Interdependence: Interdependence recognizes differences but realizes that each offer something that the other needs, resulting in equality in the relationship. We should not view others in a patronizing or paternalistic way. God created diversity and desires unity in diversity.

## **8. HOW DO YOU GET PLUGGED IN?** **(YOU REALLY DO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER.)**

Christian stewardship embraces every activity of life. Many churches make the mistake of narrowing the focus of stewardship to finances.

### **The Foundational Principle of Christian Stewardship**

Psalm 24:1-2: A PSALM OF DAVID. *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, <sup>2</sup> for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.*

Because the church is a body, it is comprised of many parts, each of which is necessary for the health of that body. The more parts that function in health, the stronger the church body is and the more effectively it operates.

Romans 12:3-8: *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

### **Prayer:**

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said, “*There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christians so much as our prayer life.*”

### **Finances:**

The gospel is the lens by which Christians are to view all of life. Seeing Christ's sacrificial love for us, that he gave up everything so that we could inherit the riches of heaven, helps us develop a healthy attitude toward our material possessions and become people who are both generous and joyful. Understanding the riches we have already received in Christ not only liberates us from excessive concern over our wealth, talents, and time, but also motivates us to invest them in the eternal kingdom of God. Biblical giving results from the grace of God taking hold in our lives. God has blessed us with the indescribable gift of Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed by his shed blood, reconciled to a Holy God, and adopted into His family. Our response to His magnificent love can only rightly be that of giving ourselves to Him and then by the will of God to others. Consequently, our giving to the church and others must flow out of first giving ourselves in faith to God. We then learn to give generously and cheerfully in response to his love, not in anyway believing that we pay him back, but acknowledging in gratitude that everything, our time, talents, gifts, money, and lives belong to him. Jesus frees us and excites us to give to the work of the kingdom. If our giving isn't freely, joyfully, and cheerfully from the heart, then we have missed the focus of Christ-centered giving. We don't give to reach a standard. The standard has been met in Christ. If a believer decides in his own heart out of love for the Lord Jesus Christ that he will give a tenth of his earnings to the Lord, he is free to do so and will be blessed in it. As Stuart Murray says, “*Many fine Christians have expressed their devotion to Christ, their faith in God's promises and their commitment to the advance of God's kingdom through tithing. They testify to diverse spiritual and material blessings, which they*

associate confidently with the practice of tithing. [We must not] dismiss such testimonies or minimize the love, faith and generosity of those for whom tithing has been a powerful aid to discipleship.” However, the New Testament does not emphasize tithing, and it should not be forced upon Christians as “the biblical standard”. The New Testament teaches us that we are to give graciously, generously, sacrificially, cheerfully, and proportionately. But each of us must decide what that amount is to be before the Lord. As Christians we believe that everything is from God and everything is for God. We must never allow a concern for giving ten percent to overshadow the large and limitless commitment which we owe to God – that is everything. Christians need to be willing to give whatever the Lord may ask of them. Our giving is not optional, and it should not depend on our whim or personal feeling. The basis of our giving should be our love and devotion to God, in gratitude for His indescribable gift.

### Principles of New Testament Giving Chart

	Principle	Description	Location
1	Systematic Giving	Give on a regular basis, that is, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, etc.	1 Corinthians 16:1-2
2	Proportional Giving	Give as you have been prospered; according to your ability/means	1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
3	Sacrificial Giving	Give knowing that your sacrifice is well pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ	Romans 12:1 Philippians 4:14-18 2 Corinthians 8:10-12
4	Generous Giving	Give generously	2 Corinthians 8:2-3
5	Intentional Giving	Give deliberately in order to meet a genuine need	2 Corinthians 8:4 Philippians 4:16
6	Cheerful Giving	God loves a cheerful giver	2 Corinthians 9:6-7
7	Give Voluntarily/ Willingly	Let each one give freely as he purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, reluctantly or under compulsion	2 Corinthians 8:2-3; 9:7 2 Corinthians 8:9-15
8	Motivation for Giving	Our motivation for giving should be love for others, a desire for reciprocity, and an eye to the reward from God	
	a. Love/Grace	As Jesus gave Himself for the sins of others, believers should graciously give of themselves out of love for the sake of others	2 Corinthians 8:9
	b. Equity/ Fairness	Believers are to give so that needs are met	1 Corinthians 9:13-14 2 Corinthians 8:12-14 cf. Galatians 6:6
	c. Blessing	Give in order to receive more from God so that you can continue to bless others generously	2 Corinthians 9:6



## Things to Consider about Money and Giving

- Trust God for your needs.
- In finances, be cautious. It's usually "wants" that get us in trouble.
- Recognize your "need" to give; it is a gift from God that inspires us to care for our families and others. Without it we wouldn't survive.

## Capital Campaign Drive (information included)

### Extraordinary Spiritual Gifts: Excerpt from the PCA Position Paper on the Work of Holy Spirit Today

#### Concerning the Gifts of the Spirit

Spiritual gifts are granted to every believer by the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each Christian "individually as He wills". Christians are to use these gifts to serve Christ in the work of His kingdom and for the edification of the body of Christ. All true believers receive some spiritual gift or gifts. No spiritual gift is to be despised, nor is it to be misused to bring glory to any other than to Christ. Specific spiritual gifts noted in Scripture are found in the following passages: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-16. Some spiritual gifts plainly have ceased, such as the founding office of apostle. Others are obscure and cannot be clearly defined, such as "helps." Others are clearly seen today, such as "teaching" and "giving." Some have received undue prominence in recent days, such as "tongues," "working of miracles" and "healing."

#### A. Tongues.

It seems evident that the tongues in Acts 2 were foreign languages known to the hearers there present. It is more difficult, however, to resolve the question of the exact nature of the tongues mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. It is also difficult to determine with certainty the relationship of the modern tongues phenomenon to the New Testament experience. The General Assembly suggests, however, that:

1. Any view of the tongues as experienced in our time which conceives of it an experience by which revelation is received from God is contrary to the finalized character of revelation in Scripture;
2. Any view of tongues which sees this phenomenon as an essential sign of the baptism of the Spirit is contradictory to Scripture; and
3. Any practice of the tongues phenomenon in any age which causes dissension and division within the body of Christ or diverts the church from its mission is contrary to the purpose of the Spirit's gifts.

#### B. Miracles.

Much discussion and debate continue throughout the church of Christ on the subject of miracles. In the Scripture certain clusters of miracles were associated with various servants of God and related to the giving of revelation, such as Exodus 4:1-9; 1 Kings 17:23-24; John 2:11, 3:2. Such miracles were signs by which God communicated divine truth or confirmed that the speaker indeed spoke from God. These miracles related to revelation have ceased, since revelation was completed with the closing of the Canon in the New Testament era. Scripture also uses the term "miracle" or wonder to describe the acts of God in all areas of creation and providence. The power of God in response to believing prayer to work wonders and to heal the sick cannot be limited. Such wonders certainly do continue to this day and are all for the glory of God not man.

Finally, the General Assembly would speak a word of caution against an obsession with signs and miraculous manifestations which is not indicative of a healthy church, but of the opposite. The Spirit provides all that is necessary for the equipping of the saints through His presence and power in the lives of the regenerate. The true basis of faith and spiritual growth is the work of the Holy Spirit in believers as they are made subject to His written Word, which is sufficient in itself for spiritual growth to complete maturity. The General Assembly would also urge a spirit of forbearance among those holding differing views regarding the spiritual gifts as they are experienced today.

### **Gift Definitions and Scriptural References and Discovering My Gifts Exercise**

1. Administration: this gift is the distinctive ability to coordinate and organize people and projects.  
Luke 14:28-30; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 12:28
2. Creative Ability: this gift is the distinctive ability to use your hands and mind to benefit other believers through artistic, creative or a wide variety of construction arenas.  
Exodus 30:22-25; Exodus 31:3-11; 2 Chronicles 34:9-13; Acts 18:2-3
3. Discernment: this gift is the distinctive ability to perceive whether a person's actions originate from godly or other motivations.  
Matthew 16:21-23; Acts 5:1-11; Acts 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 John 4:1-6
4. Encouragement: this gift is the distinctive ability to appropriately communicate words of encouragement or even challenge or rebuke in the body of Christ.  
Acts 14:22; Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24-25
5. Evangelism: this gift is the distinctive ability to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others in such a way that many non-Christians believe in Christ.  
Acts 8:5-6; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 14:21; Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11-14
6. Faith: this gift is the distinctive ability to believe God with confidence for things unseen, spiritual growth and the will of God.  
Acts 11:22-24; Romans 4:18-21; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 11
7. Giving: this gift is the distinctive ability to cheerfully and generously contribute personal resources to God's work.  
Mark 12:41-44; Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 2 Corinthians 9:2-7
8. Hospitality: this gift is the distinctive ability to make people feel "at home," welcome, cared for, and part of the group.  
Acts 16:14-15; Romans 12:13; Romans 16:23; Hebrews 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:9
9. Intercession: this gift is the distinctive ability to pray for significant lengths of time, on a regular basis, and often observe specific answers to those prayers.  
Colossians 1:9-12; Colossians 4:12-13; James 5:14-16
10. Leadership: this gift is the distinctive ability to influence others according to a "big picture" purpose, mission, or plan.  
Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17

11. Mercy: this gift is the distinctive ability to feel sincere empathy and compassion in a way that results in practical relief for people's hurts, pain and suffering.  
Matthew 9:35,36; Mark 9:41; Romans 12:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:14
12. Prophecy: this gift is the distinctive ability to boldly declare the truth of God, regardless of the consequences, calling people to righteous living.  
Acts 2:37-40; Acts 7:51-53; Acts 26:24-29; 1 Corinthians 14:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5
13. Service: this gift is the distinctive ability to identify and meet the practical needs of others.  
Acts 6:1-7; Romans 12:7; Galatians 6:10; 2 Timothy 1:16-18; Titus 3:14
14. Shepherding: this gift is the distinctive ability to assume responsibility for the spiritual growth and Christian community of a group of believers.  
John 10:1-18; Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3
15. Teaching: this gift is the distinctive ability to employ a logical, systematic approach to biblical study in preparation for clearly communicating practical truth to the body of Christ.  
Acts 18:24-28; Acts 20:20-21; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14

"Discovering My Gifts (next page)"

# DISCOVERING MY GIFTS

## Step 1. Introduction to Gift Discovery

Why do I need to know my spiritual gifts?

How do I discover those spiritual gifts?

## Step 2. How to Complete the Gifts Analysis Questionnaire

Each statement in the following questionnaire has five responses spaces following it: very little, little, some, much, very much. These represent percentages on a scale of 1-100%, as follows:

Very little = 0-20%  
Little = 20-40%  
Some = 40-60%  
Much = 60-80%  
Very much = 80-100%

Read each statement. Decide to what extent the statement is true of you. Check the appropriate column. Your first impressions are usually correct.

If most of your checks are placed toward the right or toward the left, don't worry about that. Each person has his own style with questionnaires.

The questionnaire will help you discover your gifts. The results of this questionnaire will be only tentative, however.

### Step 3. Gifts Analysis Questionnaire

THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE OF ME...

	(1) Very Little	(2) Little	(3) Some	(4) Much	(5) Very Much
1. I am able to organize ideas, tasks, people, and time for Christian service.					
2. I have used a particular creative ability (writing, painting, drama, etc.) to benefit the body of Christ.					
3. I am able to distinguish between spiritual truth and error.					
4. I have been used to encourage people to live Christlike lives.					
5. I like to talk about Jesus to those who don't know him.					
6. I have had the experience of knowing God's will with certainty in a specific situation even when concrete evidence was missing.					
7. I assume responsibility for meeting financial needs in church and community.					
8. I enjoy providing a haven for guests and do not feel put upon by unexpected visitors.					
9. I take prayer requests of others seriously and continue to pray for them.					
10. I motivate groups toward specific biblical objectives.					
11. I have a knack for turning compassion into cheerful deeds of kindness.					
12. I have pleaded the cause of God to the people of the church and/or world.					
13. I enjoy doing tasks that help others minister effectively.					
14. I have been responsible for the spiritual lives of Christians with good results.					
15. Content "comes alive" for students (children or adults ) when I teach.					
16. I like to plan things in which people are involved.					
17. I would enjoy expressing myself creatively for God through artistic expression (music, drama, poetry, etc.)					
18. I see a serious danger when false teachings and false practices creep into the church.					
19. I am sensitive to suffering, troubled, and discouraged people, and want to help them see God's answers to life's problems.					
20. I would like to be able to share the gospel freely and effectively with unbelieving persons.					
21. I find myself accepting God's promises at face value and applying them to given situations without doubt.					

THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE OF ME...

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Very				Very
Little	Little	Some	Much	Much

22. I feel moved to give when confronted with financial needs in God's kingdom.					
23. I am sensitive to the acts of kindness which make such a difference for guests or strangers.					
24. I am sensitive to the prayer needs of others and concerned to give the needed prayer support.					
25. I have a desire to help, lead, guide, and direct people in an important church ministry.					
26. I would like to minister to those who have physical or mental problems.					
27. I have spiritual insights from the Scriptures relating to people and issues which make me want to speak out.					
28. I sense when others need a helping hand and am ready to give it.					
29. I am concerned to see the spiritual needs of believers met and am willing to be personally involved in nurturing and discipling ministries.					
30. I like to help people understand things.					
31. I am able to make effective plans to accomplish goals.					
32. I have significant artistic ability (music, drama, writing, painting, sculpting, etc.) which I have put to good use in God's kingdom.					
33. I have detected phony or manipulative persons and teachings when others have not.					
34. People in the Christian community have been stirred up to love and good works by my counsel and encouragement.					
35. I have been instrumental in leading others to believe in Christ as their Savior.					
36. In specific cases God has given me assurance that he would do what seemed unlikely.					
37. I give cheerfully and liberally in support of the Lord's work.					
38. I have a knack for making strangers feel at ease in my home and at church.					
39. I pray for others, recognizing that their effectiveness depends upon it.					
40. I enjoy leading and directing others toward goals and caring for them for the sake of Christ.					
41. I enjoy working with people who suffer physical, mental or emotional problems.					
42. I have proclaimed timely and urgent messages from God's Word.					
43. I like to work at little things that help build the body of Christ.					
44. I assume responsibility when I see a Christian being led astray.					

THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE OF ME...

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)  
Very Little Little Some Much Very Much

45. I am able to clarify things for learners (children or adults).					
46. I would enjoy giving oversight to an important church ministry.					
47. I have the potential to be very creative in an area that could be used in building up the church.					
48. I tend to look beneath the surface and perceive people's motives.					
49. I believe that people will grow to spiritual maturity through counsel and instruction from the Word.					
50. I have a burden for friends and acquaintances who do not believe in Christ.					
51. I have a sense for moments when the "prayer of faith" is needed.					
52. I am willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work with my financial support.					
53. I tend to be more aware of the needs of guests than of my own.					
54. I have an inner conviction that God works in response to prayer, and I want to be used to help others through prayer.					
55. If I had the opportunity, I would enjoy leading, directing, and motivating others in some aspect of the Lord's work.					
56. The sight of misery makes me want to find a way to express God's love to hurting persons.					
57. Given the opportunity, I would like to be an expository preacher of God's Word.					
58. It is my nature to like to do work that helps other do theirs.					
59. I sense in myself a shepherd's instinct when I know Christians who need spiritual counsel.					
60. I quickly sense when people (children or adults) are unclear in their thinking.					
61. I have a sense for delegating important tasks to the right people at the right time.					
62. I am aware that people have been blessed through my creative or artistic ability.					
63. I have developed an ability to discriminate between good and evil in today's world.					
64. I am glad when people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel seek my help.					
65. I am able to share the gospel in a way that makes it clear and meaningful to non-believers.					
66. I am able to go on believing God will act in a situation in spite of evidence to the contrary.					
67. I help people and the Lord's work through generous and timely contributions.					

THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE OF ME...

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)  
Very Little Little Some Much Very Much

68. My home is available to those in need of hospitality.					
69. I am conscious of ministering to others as I pray for them.					
70. I have accepted leadership responsibilities and have succeeded in helping a group work toward a goal.					
71. Sick, helpless, and shut-in persons are helped when I minister to them.					
72. God uses me to build up, encourage, and comfort other Christians by speaking to them of spiritual things.					
73. I find practical ways of helping others and gain satisfaction from doing this.					
74. The Lord has used me to watch over, guide, and nurture other believers toward spiritual maturity.					
75. I hold the interest of those I teach.					
76. I have a sense for how and when projects or ministries need to be better organized.					
77. I sense a latent creative ability (in drawing, writing, music, etc.) which I would like to use for the kingdom of God.					
78. I am usually aware of people who pretend to be what they are not.					
79. I would be willing to spend some time each week in a counseling ministry.					
80. I am able to sense when a person doesn't know Jesus Christ, and I hurt for him or her.					
81. I inwardly sense what Jesus meant when he said mountains could be moved by faith.					
82. I have a conviction that all I have belongs to God and I want to be a good steward.					
83. I have a genuine appreciation for each guest to whom I minister.					
84. I would be pleased if asked to be a prayer partner to someone involved in a ministry.					
85. I am usually quick to sense when a group I am a part of is "spinning its wheels," and I want to do something about it.					
86. I sense when people are hurting in some way.					
87. I think more Christians should speak out on the moral issues of the day, such as abortion, easy sex, racism, and so on.					
88. I wish I had more opportunity to assist others in their ministries.					
89. I would love to be in a position to equip saints for the work of ministry.					
90. I get excited about discovering new ideas I can share with other.					



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step 4. How to Use the Key Chart

Complete the Key Chart on your own. Begin by reading the instruction carefully. The leader will assist you with any questions.

1. Place the numerical value (1-5) for each statement of the questionnaire (1-90) next to the corresponding number in the Key Chart.
2. In Chart A, add each row of three numbers, and write the total in the adjoining box in the “totals A” column. Do the same in “totals B” column for Chart B, adding to the left.
3. Circle the highest scores in the “totals A” column. Circle three or four, but not more than five. Write the names of those gifts in box A, “Working Gifts,” with the highest-scored gift first, the next highest second. (In case of ties, it doesn’t matter which is listed first.)
4. Now in the “totals B” column circle the high scores which were not circled in step 3. Write these gifts in box B, “Waiting Gifts,” beginning with the highest.
5. Place in box C any gifts not listed in boxes A and B. These are likely not your spiritual gifts, but you have, of course, a responsibility (role) in each of them.
6. Note the gifts in which your “totals B” score is significantly (two or more) higher than your “totals A” score. This may indicate a gift you should develop and use.

##### Box A Working Gifts

Highest Scored Gift \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> Gift \_\_\_\_\_  
3<sup>rd</sup> Gift \_\_\_\_\_  
4<sup>th</sup> Gift \_\_\_\_\_  
5<sup>th</sup> Gift \_\_\_\_\_

##### Box B Waiting Gifts

Highest not in Box A \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
5<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

##### Box C Not a gift but a role (responsibility)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# Key Chart

Chart A			Totals A	Totals B	Chart B		
1	31	61	Administration		16	46	76
2	32	62	Creative Ability		17	47	77
3	33	63	Discernment		18	48	78
4	34	64	Encouragement		19	49	79
5	35	65	Evangelism		20	50	80
6	36	66	Faith		21	51	81
7	37	67	Giving		22	52	82
8	38	68	Hospitality		23	53	83
9	39	69	Intercession		24	54	84
10	40	70	Leadership		25	55	85
11	41	71	Mercy		26	56	86
12	42	72	Prophecy		27	57	87
13	43	73	Service		28	58	88
14	44	74	Shepherding		29	59	89
15	45	75	Teaching		30	60	90

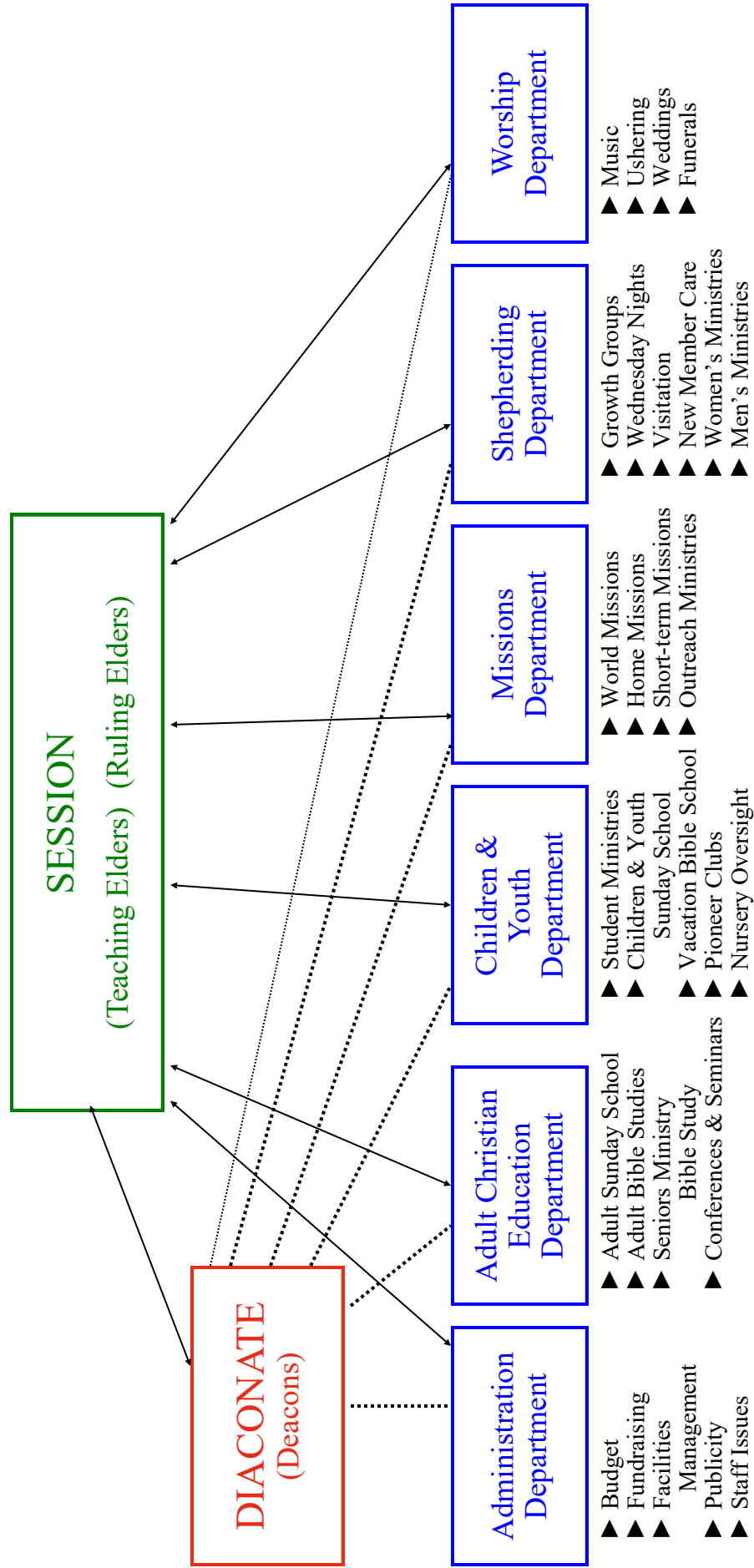
## **9. HOW DO YOU GET PLUGGED IN? (OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE)**

Redeemer has a number of ministry departments to assist the Session in their work and that are designed to develop and sustain ministries with both inward and outward focuses. As you will quickly notice, it is the desire of the Session that every believer find the best place in the church to steward the grace given them for the building up of the body of Christ.

1. **The Shepherding Department** is responsible for ministries that promote the fellowship and discipleship of Redeemer's members. (Raymond Hall)
  - a. Growth Groups (Gene Dent)
  - b. Wednesday night meals and programs (The Pastor's Forum)
  - c. Special fellowship events
  - d. Women's ministry (Cheryl Greene)
  - e. Men's ministry (Scott Marshall)
2. **The Worship Department** is responsible for all our Worship related ministries. (Bryant Taylor, Mike Campbell, Paula Granger)
  - a. Helping with every element of worship
  - b. Pulpit supply in the absence of the Pastor
  - c. Music Ministry
  - d. Ushering and greeting for worship services
  - e. Duplicating Ministry
  - f. Operation and upkeep of the sound system
  - g. Wedding and funerals
3. **Adult Christian Education Department** is responsible for the Christian education ministries of the church involving adults. (Lawson Newman)
  - a. Adult Sunday school curriculum and teacher supply and training
  - b. Bible studies for adults in the church, teacher approval and curriculum
  - c. Promotion and organization of discipleship/equipping conferences and seminars
4. **Children and Youth Department** is responsible for all activities involving the children and youth of the church. (Kelly Simpkins, Ryan Dean, Phyllis Hurley, Megan Thompson)
  - a. Oversight of Nursery, Children and Youth ministries
  - b. Running Vacation Bible School and Pioneer Clubs
  - c. Approval and oversight of all curriculum and teaching in children and youth ministries.
5. **The Administration Department** is responsible for the overall operations of the church. (Kelle Menogan and Tommy Dent)
  - a. The budget
  - b. Working with the deacons on the daily operations of the church and upkeep of the facilities
  - c. Human resources in relation to part-time and full-time staff

- d. Approving and working with the office in scheduling events and use of the building and other equipment of the church
  - e. Approve and oversee all publicity and “the message” of Redeemer (i.e., newsletter, website, etc.)
5. **The Missions Department** is responsible to keep an outward view in every ministry of the church and to assist the church in fulfilling the Great Commission. (Bill Wallace, Steve Lanier, Shelby Watts)
- a. Selection of missionaries for support
  - b. Developing a mission budget
  - c. Overseeing and promoting outreach ministries of the church (i.e., Boy Scouts, Fall Festival, etc.)
  - d. Development and maintenance of the website ministry
  - e. Evangelism training ministry
  - f. Hosting Missions Conferences
  - g. Promoting and supporting special outreach activities
  - h. Assisting other areas of the church in keeping an outward focus

**Every Ministry of the Church Is Under the Oversight of the Session.**



Every department is chaired by a member of the Session. Additional members of the Session, Diaconate, and Redeemer Church membership-at-large make up the department members. The chairperson for each sub-committee underneath the departments is a member of the department. The chair of each department submits a written report to the Session monthly for its oversight and recommendations (approval/disapproval).

# Gifts, Interests, and Skills Survey

Code: Int. = Interested, Exp. = Experience, Info. = More Information Needed

## ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

### Housekeeping:

Int.	Exp.	Info.		Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Electrical Work	___	___	___	Plumbing
___	___	___	Furniture Repair	___	___	___	Cabinet Work
___	___	___	Appliance Repair	___	___	___	Roofing
___	___	___	Drywall/Carpentry	___	___	___	Painting
___	___	___	Landscaping/Lawn Care				
___	___	___	Floor Stripping and Wax				

### Office:

___	___	___	Computer Work (Database, Typist)
___	___	___	Bulletin Design/Assembly
___	___	___	Newsletter Design/Publisher
___	___	___	Assist w/ Projects

### Administration:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Strategic Planning
___	___	___	IT Coordination
___	___	___	Fundraising
___	___	___	Website

### Other Area in Administration:

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Become a Member of the Department

### Adult Ministry:

___	___	___	Administration Work
___	___	___	Sunday School Teacher
___	___	___	Small Group Leader
___	___	___	Music for Sunday School

### Library Ministry:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Librarian
___	___	___	Book Acquisition
___	___	___	Administration/Computer
___	___	___	Story Teller/Reader for Children
___	___	___	Catalog Books
___	___	___	Aesthetics

### Other Area in Adult Christian Education:

## CHILDREN & YOUTH DEPARTMENT

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Become a Member of the Department

### Nursery Ministry:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Administration
___	___	___	Team Member
___	___	___	Wed Night Nursery Worker
___	___	___	Special Events Nursery Worker
___	___	___	Ministry Nursery Volunteer (Tutoring/Moms Study/etc.)
___	___	___	Clean Nursery
___	___	___	Greeter

### Children's Ministry:

___	___	___	Administration Work
___	___	___	Help w/Kids Evangelism Explosion
___	___	___	Host an Outing at Your Home

### Pioneer Clubs (Wed Nights)

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Trail Master
___	___	___	Music Leader
___	___	___	Club Leader
___	___	___	Club Helper

### Sunday School

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	SS Teacher
___	___	___	SS Helper

### Vacation Bible School

___	___	___	VBS Teacher
___	___	___	Drama/Puppet Min
___	___	___	VBS Worker
___	___	___	Artwork

### Student Ministry: (High School and Middle School)

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	High School S.S. Teacher
___	___	___	Middle School S.S. Teacher
___	___	___	Wednesday Night Music Team
___	___	___	Wednesday Night Discipleship Help
___	___	___	Wednesday Night Technical Help
___	___	___	Boys' Discipleship (outside church)
___	___	___	Girls' Discipleship (outside church)

___	___	___	Recreation Ministry
___	___	___	Camp/Special Event Help
___	___	___	Occasional Event Help
___	___	___	Photography/Artwork/Design
___	___	___	Youth Choir
___	___	___	Transportation
___	___	___	Use of Home/Pool for Youth Event

### Other Area in Children & Youth Department:

## MISSIONS DEPARTMENT

### World Missions Committee:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Become a Member of the committee
___	___	___	Prayer for Missions
___	___	___	Assist in Fundraising
___	___	___	Education/Communication
___	___	___	Administration
___	___	___	Correspondence
___	___	___	Mission Conference Team

### Home Missions Committee:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Become a Member of the committee
___	___	___	Church Planting
___	___	___	Local Outreach
___	___	___	Missionary Support
___	___	___	Missions Conference Team
___	___	___	Missions Correspondence

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
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### ABBA's Hope (Adoption & Foster Care)

### Community Outreach:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Transportation
___	___	___	Fall Festival Worker
___	___	___	Backyard Bible Club
___	___	___	Christmas Caroling
___	___	___	Handyman/Repairs
___	___	___	Neighborhood Association
___	___	___	Single Parent Assistance
___	___	___	Market Place Bible Studies
___	___	___	Administration
___	___	___	Job Counseling
___	___	___	Prison Min
___	___	___	Prayer Walking
___	___	___	Door-to-Door

### Dance and Drama Ministry:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Dance Instructor
___	___	___	Drama Coach
___	___	___	Administration
___	___	___	Staging
___	___	___	Assistant
___	___	___	Bible Teacher
___	___	___	Lighting

### Evangelism Training:

___	___	___	Participate in Adult Evangelism Explosion
___	___	___	Assist in Training Classes
___	___	___	Participate in Kids Evangelism Explosion.
___	___	___	Teach Sunday School Class
___	___	___	Design Training Material

### Nursing Home Ministry:

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Music Leader
___	___	___	Preacher/Teacher
___	___	___	Transportation
___	___	___	Visitation
___	___	___	Reader
___	___	___	Administration

### Sports Ministry: (Coaching, Supervision, Devotion, Mentor)

___	___	___	Basketball
___	___	___	Soccer
___	___	___	Softball
___	___	___	Other
___	___	___	Angle Ball
___	___	___	Volleyball

### R.A.Y.S. (Special Needs Ministry)

Int.	Exp.	Info.	
___	___	___	Transportation
___	___	___	Family Respite Nite
___	___	___	Home/Hospital Visits
___	___	___	Teacher (adult or children)
___	___	___	Teacher Assistant (adults or children)
___	___	___	Individual family assistance ans respite care
___	___	___	One-on-one shadowing of child/adult
___	___	___	Outreach to church community

**Home Missions Committee: (Continued)****Tutoring Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Visitation/Follow-up: (Home Visits/Follow-up on Outreach)**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Short-term Missions Committee:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

Please list any languages in which you are fluent...

**Other Area in Missions:****SHEPHERDING DEPARTMENT**

Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___

Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___

**Assimilation Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

**Wednesday Night Fellowship/Special Events:**

___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

**Member Care:**

___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

**College and Seminary Students:**

___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

**Women's Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Men's Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Boy Scouts Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Just Starting Out Singles Ministry (Post College to 30):**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Singles Ministry (31 & Up):**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Seniors Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.	Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___	___

**Other Area in Shepherding:****WORSHIP DEPARTMENT**

Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___

**Music Ministry:**

Int.	Exp.	Info.
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

**Worship Ministry:**

___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___
___	___	___

**Visitor Care Ministry:**

___	___	___
___	___	___

**Other Area in Worship:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]