

# DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## CLASS 101

### I. THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS:

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household,” (Ephesians 2:19)

### II. KEY TRUTHS:

1. The church is a family .
2. God expects you to be a member of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is an orphan .

### III. WHAT MAKES CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH (CBC) A FAMILY?

1. Our salvation (what God has done for us)
2. Our mission (why we exist as a church)
3. Our strategy (how we fulfill our mission)

### IV. OUR SALVATION

See the “How to Go to Heaven” pamphlet

### V. OUR MISSION

Trusting Jesus changes your eternal destiny, serving Jesus changes your life. The mission of Central Baptist Church is to bring glory to Jesus by first leading you to trust Him and then helping you to serve Him.

## VI. OUR STRATEGY

CBC's strategy for fulfilling its mission is to help you:

Learn His will so you can do His will (Discipleship)

Love Him more than anyone or anything (Worship)

Love others more than yourself (Ministry)

Live life with His family (Fellowship)

Lead others to join His family (Evangelism)

## VII. OUR HISTORY

## VIII. OUR BELIEFS

### Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible in its original manuscript, was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

*Psalm 19:7-11; 119; Proverbs 30:5-6; Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19*

1.1 By "The Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, not only contains and conveys the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.

1.2 By "inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

### Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in

every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

*Genesis 1:1; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 46:9; Romans 11:33; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 19:6*

### **Of God The Son, The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man ever was, nor can be born of a woman. He is "God manifest in the flesh." He lived a life of absolute sinlessness and in His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins, dying not as a martyr, but as a voluntary substitute in the sinner's place. He rose bodily on the third day and ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, interceding and preparing a place for us. He shall appear in the air to rapture His saints and shall come again with the saints to set up the throne of David and establish His millennial kingdom.

*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; 28:6; John 1:1; 14:3; 20:27–28; Acts 15:16; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 7:25; 8:6; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 3:21*

### **Of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person; equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

*Genesis 1:1–3; Matthew 28:19; John 7:39; 14:16–17, 26; 16:8–11; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:8–13; 28–31; Ephesians 1:13–14; 2 Thessalonians 2:6–8, 13*

### **Of Angels Good and Evil; Devil, or Satan**

We believe in the existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name and to serve Him. Angels who have chosen to follow God are ministers for Him on behalf of those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. There were among the hosts of angels those who fell with Satan. They are presently functioning in Satan's counterfeit system as rulers of darkness, to be resisted by the believer through the armor provided by God.

We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to

be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness--destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

*Isaiah 6; 14:12–15; Matthew 17:18; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11–13; Colossians 1:16; 1 Timothy 4:1–2; 1 Peter 1:12; 5:8; Jude 6; Revelation 19:16–20; 20:10*

### **Of Creation**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind".

*Genesis 1:1; 24; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 10:6*

### **Of the Fall of Man**

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of His Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal judgment and separation from God in a place called hell without defense or excuse.

*Genesis 1:27; 3:6; 24; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 1:32; 3:10–23; 5:12–19*

### **Of the Virgin Birth**

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost, in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man ever was born nor can ever be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.

*Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:47; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 5:20*

### **Of the Atonement for Sin**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the

Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

*Isaiah 53:4-7; 11-12; Matthew 18:11; John 3:16; 10:18; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24-25; I Corinthians 15:3; 20; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14; 7:25; 9:12-15; 12:2; I Peter 2:24; 3:18; I John 2:2; 4:10*

### **Of Grace in the New Creation**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

*Luke 5:27-29; John 1:12-13; 3:3; 6-8; Acts 2:41; 16:30-33; Romans 6:23; II Corinthians 5:17-19; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 2:1; 5:9; Colossians 2:13; II Peter 1:4; I John 5:1*

### **Of the Freeness of Salvation**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christ died for all people and the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated, wholly of grace by the Holy Spirit, and accomplished only through the mediation of the Son of God. Salvation is the work of a Sovereign God and wholly apart from any human work. It is the duty of all to accept the truth of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection and their own sinful state; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel.

*John 1:11-12; 3:3-18; 36; 5:24; Acts 13:38-39; 16:30-34; Romans 1:15-17; 5:12-21; 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:1-10; I Timothy 2:5-6; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18-23; I John 5:10-13; Revelation 22:17*

### **Of Justification**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

*Isaiah 53:11; Habakkuk 2:4; Zechariah 13:1; Acts 13:39; Romans 1:17; 3:21-28; 4:1-8; 5:1; 9:8:1; Galatians 3:11; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 10:38*

## Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

*Psalm 51:1-4; 7; Isaiah 55:6-7; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; 20:21; Luke 12:8; 13:3; 5:18:13; Romans 10:9-11; 13*

## Of the Church

We believe the Scriptures teach that the local church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its Scriptural officers are pastors, sometimes called bishops or elders, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

**The Distinctives:** This definition of the local church leads to these Scriptural distinctives:

- B** Biblical authority of the Scriptures *II Timothy 3:16–17*
- A** Autonomy of the local church *I Timothy 3:15*
- P** Priesthood of the believers *Revelation 1:5–6*
- T** Two officers, Pastor (elder, bishop) and Deacon *Philippians 1:1*
- I** Individual soul liberty (personal responsibility) *1 John 2:27*
- S** Saved Church membership *Acts 2:41, 47*
- T** Two ordinances (Baptism & the Lord's Supper) *Acts 2:41–42*
- S** Separation of Church and State *Matthew 22:21*

## Of The Ordinances of the Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is performed under the authority of the local church to show forth our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour. Baptism pictures our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

The Lord's Supper, or communion, commemorates the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the bread representing His body that was broken for us, and the fruit of the vine representing His blood that was shed for us. Before partaking of these elements each person should examine himself, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." –

*1 Corinthians 11:29*

We believe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be observed under the authority of the local church.

*Matthew 3:16; 28:19-20; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Colossians 2:12*

## **IX. THE CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH (CBC) FAMILY COMMITMENTS:**

CBC's execution of its strategy begins with your making certain commitments.

1. THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT is a commitment to Christ and the CBC family. (Class 101)
2. THE MATURITY COMMITMENT is a commitment to the habits necessary for spiritual growth. (Class 201)
3. The MINISTRY COMMITMENT is a commitment to discover and use your God-given gifts and abilities to serve God and others. (Class 301)
4. The MISSIONS COMMITMENT is a commitment to share the Good News with others. (Class 401)

Why have these commitments? We become what we're committed to. Many people are half committed to a dozen different things. If you really want to make an impact with your life, if you want your life to count, if you want to make a difference with your life, you've got to learn to be totally committed to a few things rather than half committed to a dozen things.

## **X. REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP AT CBC**

In order to be a member of the CBC family, you must fulfill all of the following four requirements:

1. You must have placed your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.
2. You must have been baptized by immersion (under water) after you placed your trust in Jesus as your personal Savior.

3. You must have completed Class 101: Discovering Church Membership.
4. You must desire to abide by the Membership Commitment.

## **XI. THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM**

Baptism does not save you, so why is it important? And why baptism through immersion (under water)?

### **A. Why should I be baptized?**

1. To follow the example set by Christ.

Jesus was baptized by John in a river. Why was Jesus baptized? In order to save Him? No, He didn't need to be saved. He was perfect. Baptism doesn't save you. It is a symbol of obedience and it's an example that we are to follow.

2. Because Christ commands it.

Christ commands that every Christian be baptized. Jesus said for us to go to all people everywhere and (1) make them His disciples, (2) baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and (3) teach them to obey everything He commanded. These are the three things the church is commanded to do: make disciples -- help people come to know Christ; baptize them; and help them grow up. Many people think, "I'll be baptized after I've grown up. After I know about the Christian life, then I'll be baptized." No, it's right after you make the decision to trust Christ.

3. It demonstrates that you are a believer.

Baptism doesn't make you a Christian. It just shows that you are a Christian. Baptism just says to the world, "I'm not ashamed to tell the whole world what's happened to me. I've placed my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior."

### **B. What is the meaning of baptism?**

1. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.
2. Baptism illustrates my new life as a Christian.

C. Why should I be baptized by immersion?

1. Because Jesus was baptized that way.

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

3. That's what the word means. "Baptize" literally means "dip under water." The Greek word baptize means to dip under water.

4. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection.

D. Who should be baptized?

Every person who's believed in Christ. There is only one qualification in the Bible to be baptized. You've got to believe in Christ. Obviously you've got to be old enough to understand what that's all about.

E. When should you be baptized?

As soon as you become a believer. Or as soon as you realize its importance. Maybe you've been a believer for a while but you didn't realize how important it was. There's nothing special about the water. The water in the baptistry is not holy. What is holy is the faith of the people. It's not where you're baptized. It's why you're baptized -- to publicly say, "I trust the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior." There's no reason to delay. After you've decided to trust Christ you ought to be baptized.

## **XII. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER.**

The difference between being an attender and being a member can be summed up in one word -- commitment. The difference between being an attender at a church and being a member is like the difference between living together and getting married. If you're just living together there's no commitment; you can walk out at any moment. Marriage means you're committed for the duration. At CBC, we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership in our church for four reasons.

### 1. A Biblical Reason.

Christ is committed to the church and it shows obedience to what He is committed to. The Bible says that Christ loves the church and gave His life for it. The more mature you grow as a Christian, the more you're going to love the church. The more like Christ you become, the more you're going to be willing to give your life for the church. It's not perfect but it's what Jesus died for. If we're going to be like Christ, we'll be as committed to the church as He is.

### 2. A Cultural Reason.

It is an antidote to our society. We live in an age where very few people want to be committed to anything ... a job, a marriage, a church, a country. This attitude has produced a generation of church shoppers and church hoppers. They hop around from one church to another. Membership swims against the current of America's consumer religion.

### 3. A Practical Reason.

It defines who can be counted on. Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies who's in our family and who's not.

### 4. A Personal Reason.

Membership produces spiritual growth. The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You can't be accountable when you're not committed to any specific church family. We're not into rituals or organization or simply signing your name on a piece of paper and it meaning nothing. That's not what membership is all about. We're talking about a step in your personal development. First, you place your trust in Christ. But that's just your first step in your growth. Next, you need to commit yourself to Christ's family, the body of believers. If you don't like other Christians you're not going to like heaven -- that's all who's going to be there. If you're not willing to commit to some other Christians right now, what do you think you're going to enjoy about heaven?

## **XIII. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU AS A MEMBER?**

These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Commitment.

# MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

Having trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and having been baptized, and being in agreement with Central Baptist Church's mission and beliefs, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the CBC family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members of CBC to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church by striving to (a) act in love toward the other members, and (b) not gossip.

2. I will share the responsibility of my church by striving to (a) pray for its growth, (b) invite the unchurched to attend, and (c) warmly welcome those who visit.

3. I will serve the ministry of my church by striving to (a) discover my gifts and talents, (b) be equipped to serve, and (c) develop a servant's heart.

4. I will support the testimony of my church by striving to (a) attend faithfully, (b) live a godly life, and (c) give regularly.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature