

# CITY FOUNDATIONS

## Welcome!

Welcome to **City Foundations** – a time where we take a look at the inner workings of our church to help you decide if we are the church for you.

We are thrilled that you are thinking of joining our church. There are so many wonderful churches in our area that it always amazes me that people join ours! But, actually, that is the Kingdom of God in action, isn't it? All the churches are part of the same fishing fleet, all under the command of 'Admiral Jesus'! And, each fishing boat seems better suited to fish in a certain part of the 'lake'. This way, together we can reach everyone with the gospel. Of course, each boat will have a slightly different way of doing things.

We hope that this course will help you understand the way that we are trying to do things on our 'boat'.

*We would love you to join our church if you feel that is what God is saying. If you don't end up joining our family, then we hope you will soon join another church. But remember that you are very welcome to visit our church at any time!*

*Ask lots of questions! Enjoy the course!*

*The Eldership*

# The 3 Vs: Keeping Church Simple

PJ Smyth from South Africa helpfully has suggested that church life can be encapsulated within a 3 V's' model. That is, all of church life can be summarised as a part of one of three V's: Vision, Values and Vehicles.

Put simply, 'Vision' is the *where*. The destination, from God, that the church is called to head towards.

The 'Values' are the *what*. That is, what the journey feels like as we make our way towards this God-given destination.

The 'Vehicles' are the *how*. The variety of different meetings, projects and ministries that enable us to actually make our way towards our God-given destination.

Thus, the following booklet is a walk through life here at The City Church Canterbury using this 3 V's framework. It aims not to cover every detail of church life but instead to provide an *overview* that will hopefully spark questions from you as the day unfolds.

**Again, please do ask questions as we go along!** The day works best when you are proactive and we don't have to do all the talking!

# VISION

## The Story so Far...

### Looking back

#### WHEN DID TCCC BEGIN?

The City Church Canterbury was 'planted' here in the city in September 1989 when about 50 Christians gathered together, both local believers and others from across the UK who moved to Canterbury in response to the prompting of God. We are in the Kent region of *Newfrontiers*. In the East Kent sector there are *Newfrontiers* churches also in Ashford, Faversham, Herne Bay and Whitstable and Broadstairs.

#### SOME HIGHLIGHTS?

Always had a strong emphasis on teaching of God's Word

A 'Sending' church

A resourcing church

Various Sunday meeting locations over the years

#### WHAT IS NEWFRONTIERS?

Access *Newfrontiers*' website for further details: [www.newfrontiers.xtn.org](http://www.newfrontiers.xtn.org)

*Newfrontiers* is a team ministry led by Terry Virgo, which works together, according to shared values and goals, with a world-wide family of over 600 churches on all five continents.

The mission of *Newfrontiers* is to advance the kingdom of God through:

Restoring the church

Making disciples

Training leaders

Planting churches

Reaching the nations

*Newfrontiers* churches build on certain key values. These would include: Grace, relationship, Ephesian 4 ministries, worship, honouring the Word and loving the Spirit.

We are a network of churches that helps each other. Our first priority is to cultivate strong relationships, so regional leaders meet together regularly. There are also Prayer and Fasting retreats several times a year for leaders, and national and international conferences. Our churches benefit from apostolic input and from ministries listed in Ephesians 4, namely prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who travel amongst the churches.

## The Story to come...

## Looking Ahead

We are living in days in which God has spoken very clearly to us about the vision He has for us for the next season of church life. This is expressed through two keys ways:

1. Our Vision Statement
2. Our Vision Prophecies

### 1. Our Vision Statement

*'To be a big community of radical disciples which impacts Canterbury and beyond for Jesus'*

### 2. Our Vision Prophecies

These include:

*'To be a teaching centre'* [Keith Hazell – 2006]

*'To be a sending centre'* [Keith Hazell -2006]

*'To be strong in the arts'* [Julian Adams and Keith Hazell 2006]

*'To be strong in mentoring and discipleship'* [Keith Hazell 2006]

*'To have national impact'* [Keith Hazell 2006]

Other more recent prophecies we are praying into include:

*'a new bowl' – 'new shapes...moulds.....ideas....pioneering ministries'*

*'media'*

*'work amongst the poor'*

*'multiple buildings'*

*'1000's of people resourced....a church of 1000'* [Julian Adams, May 2007]

## The Story right now.....

## GROWTH

### Growth in size

We are currently a church with approx 380 adults in cell groups and many children under the age of 11!

We typically gather around the 300 mark (including children) on a Sunday, although this is growing all the time!

We currently have 300 adult members in church membership.

As a result of this growth we now meet every Sunday at Canterbury High School.

### Growth in giving

We have also grown in terms of our income over the past 19 years. For example,

| 2004/5<br>12 Months | 2005/6<br>12 Months | 2006/7<br>12 Months | 2007/8<br>12 Months | 2008/09<br>7 Months |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| £232,090            | £275,714            | £296,188            | £300,893            | £157,422            |

### Growth in releasing

We have seen growth in the number of paid staff who have been employed in the past few years.

Thus, we currently have the following paid staff:

1. Tom Shaw - Lead Elder
2. Hugh Pearce – Elder (part time)
3. Tim Wilson – Elder (part time)
4. Hazel Surgenor – Church Administrator
5. Andy Chevalier – Volunteers and Communications manager
6. Roger Eaton – Projects & Ministries Manager

Helen and Liam Thatcher are also based at the church offices. They are both employees of *Newfrontiers* directly and have a wide range of responsibilities.

Each year we have a range of volunteers, often recent graduates, who serve the church unpaid in a variety of different ministries.

The church offices are located at:

44 St Peters Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2BG. Tel; (01227) 455 440

All enquires: [info@thecitychurch.org.uk](mailto:info@thecitychurch.org.uk)

Website: [www.thecitychurch.org.uk](http://www.thecitychurch.org.uk)

## Why we believe in membership...

The church consists of everyone in every era and every nation that has been born again. But it is expressed through local churches. God's plan is for every believer to be meaningfully added to a local church and become a functioning part of the body (Acts 2v41 & 47; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4).

Terry Virgo writes: *individuals who have never experienced the joy and delight of belonging to a loving and vital Christian body have missed one of the thrills of the Christian life. Mere 'church-going' was never in God's plan for you. He wants you very closely knit with a group of dear friends with whom you can share your life.*

Reasons why we are convinced of local church membership

**The New Testament's structure:** The epistles are written to local churches on the assumption that all believers would be members of local churches

**It is stated in the Bible:** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3000 thousand were added to their number...and the Lord added to their number daily (Acts 2v41&47).

**It is implied in the Bible:** The kind of descriptions of life amongst the early believers (e.g. Acts 2-4) implies an up-close-and-personal community that is only possible in the form of a local church. Furthermore, a consistent biblical metaphor for the church is that of a body – an intimate functioning body, not just a worldwide 'cyber' body.

**New Testament language of leadership and followership:** The bible cautions church leaders that they will be held to account for how they lead (1 Cor 3; Heb 13), and equally followers are instructed to obey their leaders. This obviously presupposes a situation where you know who is leading who, and who is following who!

**New Testament discipline:** Paul instructed his churches that in cases of ongoing unrepentance, they should finally resort to putting people out of the church. It is indeed staggering that some believers voluntarily choose to live in this state!

# VALUES

So, whilst our 'vision' is *where* we are going together as a church, our 'values' are *what* the journey feels like on the way.

So if we hold on to the metaphor, if our spiritual destination is X, then our values are things like; what speed the vehicle(s) drive at to get there, the temperature of the vehicle, what sort of tunes are on the music system etc.

Our values are actually very important and make us distinctive in terms of 'who we are' as a church.

We have three main values as a church and many 'sub values' contained within those overarching values;

1. Authentic Encounter
2. Authentic Family
3. Authentic Mission

## 1. Authentic **Encounter**

Everything starts with the fact that to be a Christian fundamentally means we are a people who have encountered God. We don't know just 'about' God; we make the bold claim to actually *know* God. This core value expresses itself in a variety of different ways.

- a. Encountered through **Scripture**
  - We believe that God inspired the words of the Bible to be written ( 2 Timothy 3:16).
  - It is *the* ultimate revelation of who God is and what His purposes are in the earth.
  - The Bible is the supreme authority to which we refer in all matters of faith and practice.
- b. Encounter with **Jesus**
  - We believe the Bible is all pointing to Jesus, from start to finish.
  - That the Lord Jesus Christ has always existed but was born of a virgin and became fully man. He lived a sinless life and died for our sins on the cross and He rose again from the dead and ascended to heaven.

- We believe Jesus is the Son of God and that he is both fully God and fully man (Colossians 2:9, Philippians 2: 6-11)
- That Jesus is the only way to know God (John 14:6).

Acts 2:38 shows us **four key elements** to entering into an encounter with God through Jesus Christ, two of which we do and two of which God does:

(Peter speaking regarding this encounter) – **‘Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’** (see Appendix 1)

But what we see is that Scripture leads us to conclude that God’s intent for us is that although we individually are forgiven and given the gift of the Spirit, we then immediately outwork all He has for us in the context of authentic family.....

## 2. Authentic Family

Bruce Milne puts it:

*‘Biblical religion is inescapably corporate. The believing community is the soil in which personal faith sprouts and is nourished. Scripture knows nothing of solitary religion. Individuals cannot be reconciled to God without being reconciled to the people of God among whom their experience of God’s grace immediately sets them.’*

Just as burning coals require being next to other hot coals to stay hot, so too a key value we see in Scripture is that every Christian needs to be alongside others in order to stay ‘hot for God.’

The Christian life is not an exclusive ‘me and Jesus’ experience. It is essentially about being a valued and functioning part of a body, in which every member plays its role for the benefit and welfare of the whole body [see Ephesians 4:16].

There is a clear value that we hold as a church that we are to share our lives together. Church is not a only a Sunday affair, but a 24/7 deal. The early church met ‘daily’ (Acts 2:46) and their new spiritual family was of huge importance.

God has always wanted a people, not just individual persons. We have a real enemy who loves to whisper to us that we don’t need others and others don’t need or want us. Thus, we have to ‘fight the good fight of faith’ (1 Tim 6:12) and resist the urge to view the Christian life through 21<sup>st</sup> Century eyes of individualism, but instead in humility, knit ourselves into a group of people whose presence is actually key to your spiritual growth.

This authentic family life then facilitates our growth in at least two ways:

1. Fruit of the Spirit
2. Gifts of the Spirit

### a) **Fruit** of the Spirit

Galatians 5 says:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

We often wrongly read the above Scripture with an individual mindset. However, this letter was written to a community and the point was clear – that we actually grow in these characteristics through the ‘rough and tumble’ of real life lived together not in isolation.

**Love**

**Joy**

**Peace**

**Patience**

**Kindness**

**Goodness**

**Faithfulness**

**Gentleness**

**Self-control**

The above list is really all about **character**. That is, that the Christian life is a journey for each of us in growing to become more like Jesus (‘Sanctification’).

As a result, another sub-value that relates to the above value of ‘fruit of the spirit’ is that of **discipleship**.

**How** are we meant to become a people of good, fruitful character?

We find there are a variety of different ‘discipleship models’ in the New Testament but they all have the common aim of developing the one being disciplined into someone more like Jesus.

Thus we see:

- Jesus and his 12 disciples (Mtt 10:1)
- Jesus and his 72 (Luke 10:1)
- Jesus and his three (Peter, James and John: Luke 9:28)
- Paul and his two (Timothy and Silas: Acts 16:1)

The exact way a discipleship relationship works will be different in each different setting, but the value of intimate, close friendship that involves accountability, someone who is a little further ahead in an area than those being disciplined, which takes time and energy over a set period of time, is a value we hold dearly.

History is littered with people who failed to reach their full potential in God – discipleship (in whatever form) is a huge Biblical tool in facilitating real spiritual transformation in us.

We aim to see everyone being disciplined and everyone being open to discipling others.

In addition, what we see in the New Testament is a high value put on **gifts** of the Spirit as well as fruit.

## b) **Gifts** of the Spirit

**I Corinthians 12** is key here:

*Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.*

**Firstly** then we value 'Not being ignorant.' It is easy to be ignorant unless we are careful to allow Scripture to shape our thinking. We give time publically then to teaching into what the gifts of the Spirit are, how we can grow in them, and how we are to steward them well as a body.

**Secondly**, the starting point is that we cannot be a Christian ('say Jesus is Lord' v3) without the Holy Spirit! We all have Him in us and therefore must not fall into the wrong thinking that some Christians have the Holy Spirit and others don't. This is wrong! 'no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.' Any two-tier Christianity is heresy.

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. v 5-7*

**Thirdly**, gifts are all about diversity. There are many different type of gifts and yet they all have one source – Jesus. We must avoid therefore any sense of comparing ourselves with others who have different gifts. Our eyes are not to be horizontally on each other as much focussed vertically on our wonderful Lord. They are given 'for the common good' ie not primarily for us to feel nice about ourselves but about building up and blessing the body. Each different type of gift is needed if we are to become strong and mature as a church body.

Paul goes on to deal with this temptation to compare with others gifts in verse 14:

*Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. v 14-15*

*And: If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. v 19-20*

*To one there is given through the Spirit the message of **wisdom**,*

*to another the message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit,*

*to another **faith** by the same Spirit,*

to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit,  
to another **miraculous powers**,  
to another **prophecy**,  
to another **distinguishing between spirits**,  
to another **speaking in different kinds of tongues**,  
and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**.

**All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. v 8-11**

We see Paul exalts all these gifts as highly important for a church to pursue and enjoy if it is become all that God would have it become.

However we do see Paul particularly emphasise the gift of prophecy:

1 Cor 14:1

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.*

We also see in Romans Ch 12 Paul outline a similar and yet slightly different list of spiritual gifts we are to expect and pursue. It broadens the possibilities to include the following gifts not mentioned in 1 Corinthians Ch 12:

**Serving** v7

**Teaching** v7

**Encouraging** v8

**Contributing** v8

**Leadership** v8 (see next section below)

**Showing mercy** v8

As a church family that is aiming to be as Biblically authentic as possible, a huge part of what it means to be that, is that EVERYONE is thoroughly convinced that Spiritual gifts are real, are from Jesus, are vital, are wonderful and are available by grace 'and he gives them to each one, **just as he determines.**' (1 Corinthians 12:11)

We value spiritual gifts that are not necessarily as public as others. 1 Corinthians 12:23 –

*and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,*

Thus, as a church we make it a value to often publically honour those in ministries that are more hidden and may get forgotten. If others get offended because they weren't mentioned one particular week because we were focussing on another set of people, that is a risk we are prepared to take. This value is a big deal here!

### **c) Leadership**

I hope you will agree that a church family which is pursing and growing in all the above is a pretty exciting place to be!

But we do believe that it won't 'just happen'. That is, we are made in such a way that in order for us to reach our full potential in God in terms of fruit and gifting, we need others generally as well as specifically (discipleship) but this *whole overall structure* is put in place and held in place by leaders at every level.

We have both an enemy who wants to distract believers from the mission God has given them and also our own fleshly nature that is yet to be sanctified that wages war with our true, new self. These two truths combined mean that we need Godly leaders, both men and women, who are called by God, gifted by God, to see ahead and be of good courage (Joshua 1) and come good times or tough times, press on and show us the way.

A church needs a whole host of different leaders who lead in many different realms and exercise the Roman 12:8 gift of leadership for the benefit not of their own egos, but the church body. All these leaders are 'your servants for Jesus' sake' [2 Corinthians 4:5]. They equip you and train you to serve Jesus in the church and in the world [Ephesians 4:12]

Here are a few examples:

#### **CHURCH LEADERSHIP – Elders, Overseers, Pastors**

The New Testament uses three terms with regard church leadership: 'elder', 'overseer' and 'pastor.' They are used interchangeably and simply help describe different aspects of the one job (eg 'elder' refers to the character of the man, 'overseer' refers to the scope of their leadership, 'pastor' refers to the way they are to lead (with a loving, shepherding manner)).

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT OF YOUR ELDERS?**

**Read** 1 Timothy 3 v1-7, Titus 1 v5-9, Hebrews 13: 7, 17-19, 24 and 1 Peter 5:1-3

Men who live by and preach the Word of God to you. A leader's authority is, in the end, only the authority of God in his life and ministry.

Men whose way of life is seen to be righteous and successful – men whose lives 'work spiritually'.

Men of faith – a faith which is worth imitating and which attracts you to trust them and follow them.

Men who 'keep watch over you' and regard themselves as answerable to God for your welfare and progress.

## AS ELDERS WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT OF **YOU**?

Hear the Word of God through us and take it personally

Obey us – make the responsibility a joy, not a burden, by humbly accepting authority – you will receive a blessing. Elders are accountable to God for you! Submission is an attitude of heart. To submit is to voluntarily place yourself under the care, protection and guidance of your leaders. Willing submission to spiritual authority brings great blessing because those 'under authority' find they have authority: Matthew 8:9

Follow our example and the lead we give.

Pray for us and our families.

Greet us warmly, making us feel loved, appreciated and respected.

We believe that eldership as described in the New Testament is the only leadership role that is reserved for men only. This is because:

1. In 1 Timothy and Titus 1, such phrases as 'husband of but one wife' and the repeated use of the word 'he' seem to clearly set aside this role for men only
2. In 1 Timothy 2:12 where Paul says '*I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man*' is further evidence for male only church leadership (as 'teaching and exercising authority' are in essence the core ingredients of what elders do).
3. The reason Paul gives for why this is so, does not address apparent cultural problems that needed to be straightened out as some scholars would speculate (eg over-bearing women in the church in Ephesus) but instead points all the way back to the creational differences in men and women, pre-fall (Genesis 2). That is, that men and women are fundamentally equal in the sight of God (Genesis 1) but have different roles. Like the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equal but have different roles. Genesis 2 sets out that God's design is for Adam to, [lead eve and the family] with humble servant-like manner. He is given moral responsibility for the family. This is why God goes to Adam rather than Eve when Eve and then he sins. If we are happy that God's design is for humble, servant-like leadership in the biological 'little' families that He gives us, it is only one more step to then say like-wise, as Paul argues, it is God's desire for men to lead in a similar manner God's 'big' family – that is the local church.

All other types of leadership within the local church are fully open to women. These include:

Cell leadership, Cell Coordinating, Worship leaders, evangelistic ministry leaders (Alpha, ROCS, Welcome Team, Integration team, Coffee and Chaos, CDAC, Deaflinks), pastoral ministry leaders (TGR, CCY, Students, Mens and Womens ministries, Family courses). We also have women serving in leadership in our building management team and in our finance team as trustees. Some of these roles are expanded upon below.

We also fundamentally believe that church leadership is team-based, as seen in the New Testament (see upcoming section on 'team' for more. All references to 'elder' in the New Testament with regards the emergence of the local church, are in the plural ('elders'). For example: Acts 11:30, Acts 14:23, Acts 15:23, 1 Timothy 4:14, Titus 1:5, James 5:14, 1 Peter 5:1). Within our eldership, there is a lead elder, whose role is to serve the eldership. Thus, it should be said that 'the lead elder doesn't *lead the church* but he leads the eldership which in turn leads the church.'

## **CELL LEADERSHIP**

We will look in more detail what cells are in the 'Vehicles' section. However, it worth outlining here the high importance we place upon those who are called to lead these vital, mid-week groups designed to be both pastoral and missional.

For a cell to be a rocking place to be, it takes men and women who are genuine leaders. That is, people whom others follow, who know how to hold a conversation, who are passionate about Jesus, who love to pray and love to enthuse others about reaching the city. Below are the expectations of a cell leader as articulated on our annual Cell Leadership Training Programme:

**Expectations** of a cell leader....

In addition, the Cell Leaders Training course teaches that good cell leaders need to be 'devoted....diligent.....and daring!'

## **CELL COORDINATORS**

Whilst ultimate pastoral responsibility lies in the hands of the elders of the church, as we as a church grow larger, undoubtedly the day-to-day 'pastoring' of the many hundreds must be increasingly the job of trustworthy, faithful cell leaders. However, these leaders themselves must be supported as much as possible in this 'front-line' pastoral role.

As a result, another type of vital leadership at City Church, is that of Cell Coordinator. Cell Coordinator's primary role is to support the cell leaders and to help them to be the best they can be and see the cell reach full maturity.

### **d) Team**

Whilst leadership is hugely important, the 'other side of the coin' is that of the sub value of team.

**Jesus** modelled teamwork.

He didn't concentrate on the gathering of the crowds but first he sought men who would comprise his leadership team. He didn't seek the crowds, in fact he seemed to want to avoid them. He sought a team. His teaching and interaction was with this team.

Teamwork is not only Biblical but also hugely wise for a multitude of reasons.

1. It helps prevent over-blown egos. The glory of a success is shared (and the shame of a failure is shared!).

2. Requires leaders to be secure so they are willing to see others do things they might have previously done themselves.
3. Requires leaders to not be naive that they can achieve the task alone.

Team is a key value for us.

### **e) Diversity**

Another sub value within the overall value of authentic family, is that of diversity.

Simply put, the Bible constrains us to conclude that God's heart is not just for a people (as important as that is) but it is for a *diverse* people. We see this theme emerging throughout Scripture:

For example;

*Isaiah 42: 6 I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles*

*Isaiah 2:2 In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it*

*Ephesians 2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

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

*Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands..*

This value of diversity means that we generally have all-age, family cells rather than cells made up of people who are similar (eg all students, all business persons, all singles etc). Having said that, we are not totally rigid in this and so, when led by the Spirit, do have exceptions (eg youth cells, 8-11's cell, fresher cells).

This value of diversity means our Sunday morning corporate worship avoids becoming too narrow in its feel. That is, whilst some younger people may only want a more 'Soul Survivor feel,' we deliberately encourage doing older songs, hymns and songs from different music genres (eg gospel, African, funk). Whilst some may want the volume at one level, because we are a loving, authentic and diverse family, others may not share that view and so we look to (on non-theologically immovable issues like this) be as 'flexible' as possible.

This value of diversity means that we have a range of projects and ministries that are designed to connect with people in this city, from every walk of life and background, with the good news of Jesus. (see 'Get Connected' section at end of document for details).

## **f) Grace**

The picture we are therefore painting is one of a church family, that is made up of people from every different background, sharing their lives together, 24/7. Skate-boarders serving with surgeons, bank managers befriending bin men, teenagers talking with teachers.

Where naturally there would be hostility, there is love, peace and genuine depth of friendship between the most diverse of people! THIS is what makes the world sit up and go 'wow!'

But clearly, as people yet to be fully glorified, this is no easy challenge! As a result, showing grace to one another is actually another key sub-value. Without it, we stand no chance of seeing the fulfilment of the overall value of 'authentic family.'

Colossians 3:13 says:

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

Ephesians 4:2 says:

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

## **3. AUTHENTIC MISSION**

I hope that your conclusion as you have read the preceding sections is; 'Wow! Church built on these values sounds like a truly amazing place to be!' In contrast to others thinking that church may be a boring, dusty building, 'church,' when based on these previous values, is literally the most dynamic place on planet earth.

As a result of this, we are led finally in this 'values' section, to our third and final major value-that of mission. Simply put, what we mean is that before Christ's Return, the church exists on earth not primarily for the Christians to have a nice cuddly time together, but to be ambassadors of Christ to a world that is currently hell bound.

PJ Smyth puts it like this:

*Please click your fingers 10 times at a speed of one click per second. Have you done it? Here is the truth: every time you clicked your fingers someone died and went to hell. As a Christian, you have a new responsibility to tell other people about Jesus. YOU are an essential part of the process of other people becoming Christians. You might not always be the one who 'clinches the deal', but it takes many players to score one goal!*

### **a) SUNDAYS**

### **b) KINGDOM**

Through Matthew 10: 7 Jesus says to us:

*'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.'*

Being a church with 'authentic mission' as a core value means that we gather in order to be sent. We don't gather in order to just have a good time (although that's a glorious side effect!). We gather and re-group again and again to mutually encourage each other to go on again in seeing the fulfilment of the Matthew 10:7's command.

Specifically, as a church we highly value the reality of sign's, wonders and miracles.

We believe that this is an essential part of what it means to be an authentic New Testament church on an authentic 21<sup>st</sup> Century mission. We are passionate about more than just proclaiming the truth with words (as great as this is).

Having the Kingdom as a value that we hold dear means:

- On Sundays we make room for testimonies, particularly regarding breakthrough in healing and salvation
- On Sundays we always have a ministry team ready and primed to pray after the meeting in order to minister Christ's love and power afresh to those who come forward
- On Sundays we will make room, when led by the Spirit, to step out and go for the impossible, even when it seems not happen!
- During the week to mutually encourage one another to make every situation a potentially miraculous one.
- To agree with Mary who said: 'nothing will be impossible with God' (Luke 1:37)

### c) **GIVING**

2 Corinthians Ch 9:6 says: *whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

The Old Testament law of tithing has been replaced by the New Testament emphasis on grace, but the tithe [10%] sets a 'benchmark' or minimum that grace usually exceeds.

We see in the Book of Acts, the early church was a place where people gave incredibly generously to the mission:

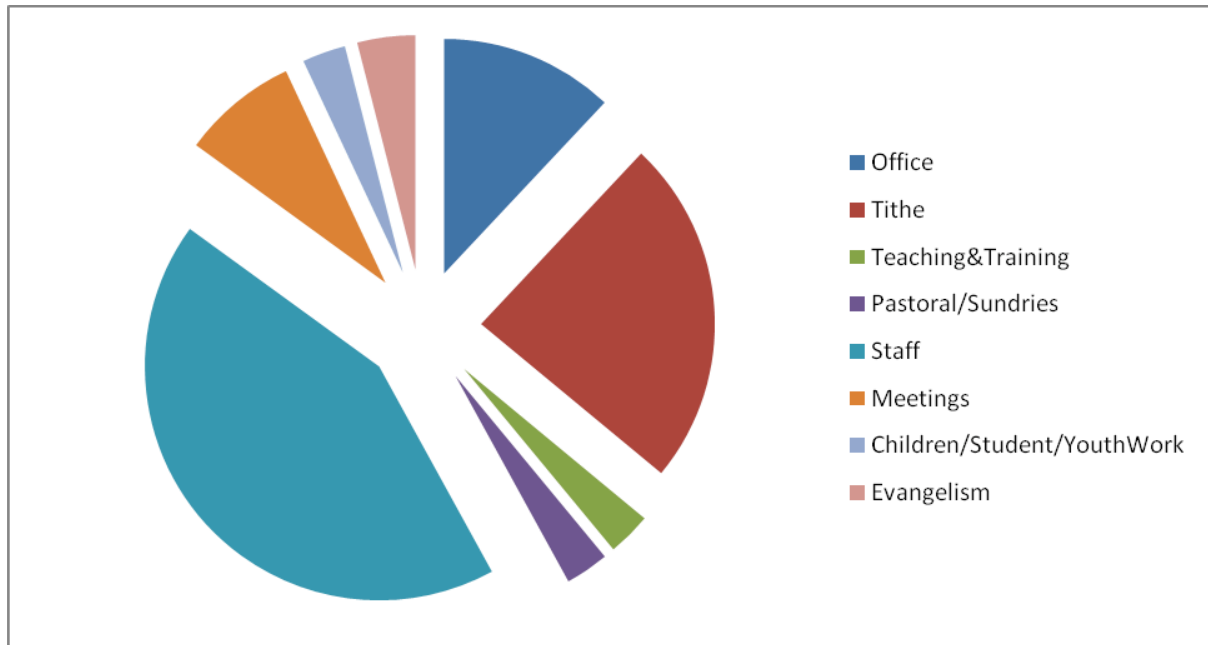
Acts 4:34, 35 says:

*There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.*

As Elders, we work in conjunction with a wider finance team (treasurer, trustees etc) to ensure total transparency and being above reproach, particularly in matters such as setting staff salaries.

We endeavour to communicate as often as possible where the money the church gives, goes. This is achieved through annual church family gatherings such as 'Fellowship Meal,' Vision Sunday and the information is also available on the members area of our website in pie-chart form and table form.

Thus currently, our church **expenditure** for 2006/07



**(Total Income £338, 708)**  
**Total expenditure £313, 684**

The City Church Canterbury is self-supporting in that it relies on God to provide for its financial needs through the tithes and offerings given by its own members and does not receive any funding from *Newfrontiers* or other organisations.

### **SOWING IN FAITH**

To sow money in to the Lord's work is a venture of faith which will reap a proportionate reward [2 Corinthians 9:6, Luke 6:38]. Trust God to supply all your needs [Philippians 4:19] and He will. The more you prosper, the more you will have to give, and the greater will be your joy [2 Corinthians 9:9-11].

### **HOW TO GIVE**

- Freely and willingly (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- Proportionately (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
- Regularly (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
- Generously (2 Corinthians 8:2)
- In faith (Hebrews 11:6(b))

### **PRACTICALLY THEN....**

There are three ways you can give directly to the church. These are:

1. By standing order from your bank
2. By cheque – addressed to The City Church Canterbury
3. By cash

Many people find that a standing order is a good way to give regularly. It also helps us to meet our monthly commitments and in our overall financial planning. A standing order form is enclosed should you wish to use it. (Please advise us by means of the enclosed form if you set up a standing order.)

Each Sunday we take up an offering as part of our worship to God, and cheques and cash can be placed in the offering basket as it is passed around during the service.

### **Tax-effective giving**

The City Church Canterbury is a registered charity (reg. No: 802118). Gifts and donations from people who pay tax in the UK attract tax relief, which we can claim. Currently, for every £1 given, we can claim a further 28p, so it's a significant advantage! The easiest way to do this is by the 'Gift Aid' scheme. Under this system, it is possible to include all gifts / donations made after a certain date by signing one declaration. Alternatively, a declaration can relate to a specific gift / donation. Furthermore, the declaration can be signed after the gifts / donations have been made. A general declaration form is attached. The notes on the form are very important and you may want to ask for more information before you sign the declaration.

Tax relief can also be available in three other ways:

1. Under 'Give as you earn' (Payroll Giving), which some employers are willing to arrange
2. By Deed of Covenant (although Gift Aid is much more flexible)
3. By means of a Personal Charitable Trust through an agency

If you would like further details about these or anything else mentioned in this note, or if you have instructed your bank to make a standing order, please complete and return the form.

# GIVING...

Name: .....

Date: .....

I would like more information about:

Standing Orders

Weekly Envelopes

Gift Aid

Other Means of Tax-Effective Giving

I have instructed my bank to make a standing order to The City Church Canterbury

of £ ..... per month / week / quarter

with effect from the ..... (day) of ..... (month).

**Please return this slip to the church office or place it in the offering box.**

# STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To \_\_\_\_\_  
name of bank or building society

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please pay **Royal Bank of Scotland  
Canterbury Branch**  
Canterbury  
**14 Rose Lane  
Canterbury, CT1 2ST**

Sort Code: **161520**  
A/C Name: **The City Church**  
A/C number: **11314664**

The sum of 

|   |
|---|
| £ |
|---|

 \_\_\_\_\_  
figures amount in words

Commencing **\*NOW**  
\_\_\_\_\_ and thereafter every \_\_\_\_\_  
date of payment due date and frequency

Quoting ref: \_\_\_\_\_ **and debit my/our account accordingly;  
Please put your surname here until you receive further notice.**

\* Delete if not applicable

**THIS INSTRUCTION CANCELS ANY PREVIOUS ORDER IN FAVOUR OF THE BENEFICIARY NAMED ABOVE, UNDER THIS REFERENCE.**

Name of account to be debited \_\_\_\_\_

Account number 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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Sort Code 

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The bank will not undertake to: (i) make reference to Value Added Tax or other indeterminate elements; (ii) advise payer's address beneficiary; (iii) advise beneficiary of inability to pay; (iv) request beneficiary's banker to advise beneficiary of receipt

## GIFT AID DECLARATION

The City Church Canterbury

Details of Donor:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Forename(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

I want the church to treat all donations I make or have made from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Notes:

1. You are able to cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the church. It will not then apply to donations made after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.
2. Please notify any change of name or address while the declaration is in force.
3. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the church reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).
4. If your future circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains equal to the tax that the church reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
5. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your self assessment tax return.

Please return this Gift Aid declaration to:

Hazel Surgenor  
The City Church Canterbury  
44 St. Peter's Street  
Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2BG

# VEHICLES

So far then we have outlined both the vision and the values of us as a church. That is the *where* we are going and *what* the journey feels like on the way.

Finally, we have to ask ourselves the question: ‘*How do we get there?*’ That is, *what God-ordained events, projects and ministries do we pursue that will enable us to achieve our dreams?*

There are perhaps three sub-headings within this overall section:

1. Events
2. Projects
3. Ministries

## **I. EVENTS**

### a). Sunday **Mornings**

We have already spoken about the philosophy of Sunday mornings (i.e. dinner guest not cheese toastie) and so let’s talk about the practicalities. You don’t get great Sunday mornings without lots of work, just like you don’t get a nice roast chicken without sticking a lemon in its bottom!

Sunday mornings require a team of 50 - 70 volunteers each week as well as Impacters and Church Workers pulling together in one big effort to make every Sunday morning an environment that a visitor would feel welcome and comfortable in.

Throughout the year everyone will have the joyful opportunity of serving on a Sunday morning. Most of the church serves around once or twice a month in various teams.

These volunteers are broken down into 12 teams:

- Cell Team 1 – Room set up
- Cell Team 2 – Papers & Pastries set up
- Welcome Team – Welcoming visitors to the church
- Ministry Team – Praying and counselling people
- Worship Team – Musicians and singers aiding our worship to God
- Crèche – Under 3s work
- The Great Rotation Team – 3-11s work
- Counter Culture Youth Team – 11s to 18s work
- Audio & Visual Team – Sound, lighting, video and song words techies

- Deaflinks – Signing worship songs in church
- Bookshop Team – Selling recommended resources to the church
- Car Park Team – facilitating the safe arrival, drop off, and departure of vehicles

We feel it is important that each of these 12 different teams work together and support one another on each of the Sundays that they serve in. To that end we structure the morning like this:

#### 9AM ARRIVAL

Nearly everyone will arrive at the same time (recognising they are not there just for the time it takes to do *their* particular job but rather to help and support where they can). There is half an hour to make a decent start on the various jobs that need doing.

#### 9.30AM BRIEFING

The 9.30am briefing is an opportunity for each of the teams to come together over a well earned cuppa, and hear what is happening that morning, hear exciting feedback from weeks gone by, pray for each other, be prayed for and worship together, crying out for the only truly important ingredient of a Sunday morning: the presence of God with us.

#### 9.45AM BACK TO WORK!

We have a further 25 minutes to get the place ready for all our guests. At 10am various members from Cell Team 1 will be out and about on nearby streets with signs pointing people in the right direction for parking and the car park team will be parking cars (funnily enough!).

#### 10.10AM PAPERS & PASTRIES

Guests arrive and are welcomed, served and get a chance to catch up and read the paper whilst nice music serenades them into a place of Sunday morning bliss!

#### 10.30AM

The service begins. This may seem like a great time to come and have a sit down, yet there is washing up to be done, instruments to be played, latecomers to welcome and extra chairs to put out.

#### AFTER THE SERVICE

Time to pack down and look forward to next week!

Although mornings can be tiring, they are also a fantastic opportunity to deepen old friendships, make new ones and enjoy serving all the wonderful people that God is bringing to us. Attitude is everything. We try to keep it fun and enjoyable but underlying everything is the truth that our Saviour was a King who came not to be served but to serve and we are to be like him.

#### B). SUNDAY EVENINGS

## **i. Prayer Meetings**

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to **prayer**.* Acts Ch 2:42

There are 336 hours in every two week period. That's a lot of time! And so as a result, we are passionate about as many of the church being at our two hour prayer meeting once within that two week period.

When one reads the Book of Acts it is impossible to deny that corporate prayer was a huge part of their lives. It seems they were nearly always either on the way to a prayer meeting, at a prayer meeting or on the way back from a prayer meeting!!

We therefore highly value times of praying together. And in contrast to what many may perceive as an activity that should be done 'because it's the thing that Christians do,' we cherish time in the presence of the King as our greatest delight and consider that should be as natural as breathing for a believer.

Our Sunday evening prayer meetings currently gather between 100 and 130 people and will involve extended worship, spiritual gifts, high expectations of prophecy which may steer the meeting, and very much every member in ministry! No passengers allowed!

That said, we also find that very often the Holy Spirit leads us into times of silence and awe where we are just 'drinking in the Spirit' (John 7:37).

We passionately LOVE prayer as a church and although see it as a wonderfully practical thing that quite simply 'gets stuff changed,' it is ultimately one of the purest expressions of the reality of our relationship with our Creator.

As an Eldership, we fully expect our prayer meetings to be into the multiple hundreds very soon. Not because that would be impressive, but because the Bible is clear that we are totally 'new creations' when we are born again, and this new creation operates off a totally new fuel – the fuel of the presence of God, particularly experienced when gathered together.

## **ii. Invision**

Invision is the Sunday evening students and twenties ministry at TCCC.

The vision is to see young people mature in their relationship with Jesus through corporate worship, Bible teaching and prayer ministry, and that they would be filled with vision and passion for the church!

It aims to do this by seeing:

- Every person welcomed and integrated into the life of the church
- People grow in their expression of worship, encouraged by stepping out in Spiritual gifts

- Biblical and theological understanding improve through excellent teaching
- Spiritual breakthrough and pastoral care facilitated by times of prayer ministry
- Vision for the local and global church increase through exposure to inspirational leaders
- Community develop as we fellowship together

A typical evening....

5pm The worship and set-up team arrive to set-up the hall, have a worship practice and pray for the event.

6pm Punters arrive

6:15pm After some short notices and words of introduction, we launch into a time of passionate worship!

6:45pm The speaker is introduced, the Scriptures are opened and Biblical truths are explained and applied to our lives.

7.15pm Q&A

7.30pm Finish and head off to the pub.

## C). MID-WEEK

### Cell....

#### WHAT IS A **CELL**?

Although cell comes under the 'event section', it's not just a mid week event. Cell is a small group of friends who share their lives throughout the week. It is the basic Christian community under the guidance and authority of a local church. They are small groups that form the building blocks of church life.

The term 'cell' is borrowed from biology: cells are the smallest living unit capable of function, cells are interdependent and form part of the body, Cell and celebration are intimately linked, with a mandate of worship, fellowship, discipleship and evangelism

Ultimately focussed on growth and multiplication

#### **WHY** ADOPT A CELL STRATEGY?

Close to Jesus' model of a small group discipleship

Closely modelled on Biblical 'body ministry'

Enables every member to participate in worship and community life

Allows exponential growth

Facilitates radical discipleship and accountability

Allows spiritual gifts to be released

Ensures that the Word of God is put into practice

Stimulates network/relational evangelism  
Allows rapid development of leaders in a directed and systematic manner.

## WHAT ARE THE **CHARACTERISTICS** OF A CELL?

### 1. **JESUS AT THE CENTRE**

**Every member** meeting with Jesus in the midst and being changed by him; being refreshed, restored, motivated, healed, equipped and empowered by him for the coming week; **characterised** by the life of the disciple, obedience to Jesus and development of faith, which involves having confidence in God and an expectation that he will work.

### 2. **EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY**

Every member, even the youngest Christian, having a role and a part to play in God's purposes; every individual actively involved in giving out to others; no one person, especially not the leader, doing most of the talking and sharing; characterised by encouraging every member to know their gifts and be prepared to use them in the context of the market-place, the Body of Christ and in evangelism.

### 3. **PERSONAL GROWTH**

**Every member** in the process of discipleship, maturing in faith, character and service; **characterised** by effective, fruitful discipleship that encourages a desire to grow and change to become like Jesus, free and whole to serve the Lord.

### 4. **MULTIPLICATION THROUGH RELATIONAL EVANGELISM**

**Every member** making Jesus known through evangelism, witnessing and personal mission; all members taking a responsibility to have a network of unchurched friends they are reaching out to and seeking to evangelise; developing many life-changing relationships and contacts in the world, resulting in many people slowly but surely being influenced for Christ; many being saved and added to the church; **characterised** by recognising God's heart for the lost and our responsibility in that.

### 5. **COMMUNITY**

**Every member** committed to building a genuine, dynamic community, not merely meetings. Community that meets the needs of Christian cell members and reaches out to their unchurched friends; breaking down barriers of individualism, isolationism and self-sufficiency; encouraging one another into a sense of destiny and purpose in what they do on a Monday-to-Friday basis; enjoying one another's company and having fun together; **characterised** by building communities of quality relationships, of acceptance, listening, giving and receiving, trust and honesty, vulnerability and equality, which facilitate discipleship and outreach.

### 6. **SACRIFICIAL LOVE**

**Every member** grasping the nature and value of true, Biblical love; being determined to give to others rather than grab for self; **characterised** by understanding that real love is sacrificial servanthood, unselfishly putting the interests of others before your own.

## 7. HONESTY

**Every member** walking along this crucial pathway of increasingly open, honest relationships which allows God into our lives, by His Spirit, through his Word, and through the care of our brothers and sisters; honesty and transparency create the environment for love and acceptance, and for the power of God to break in and touch us; developing a sense of mutual accountability; **characterised** by the capacity to be real and to ask for help, and an attitude of vulnerability.

## 8. INTENTIONALITY

**Every member** determined on a continuing basis, month after month, year after year, to keep these beliefs, values and structures working in the life of our church, co-operating with the Holy Spirit, recognising all the time that it is the nature of church life that things unwind ('chaos theory', 'path of least resistance', 'returning to our comfort zones') **characterised** by a joyful persevering, faithfulness, commitment and 'stickability', always aiming for the highest standards and effectiveness, ready to maintain or improve what is working, and to change what isn't.

A typical cell evening follows a '4 Ws structure' – these are, 'Welcome, Worship, Word and Witness.' Each of these sections is designed to achieve a different thing, be it fun and fellowship (welcome) or mission-orientated living (witness). Whilst this structure is helpful as it allows every member to 'have a go' at something, we also believe the Holy Spirit must be allowed to move freely and so as a result we occasionally may not make it through all four Ws in a single evening!

### SPECIAL EVENTS....

**Previous examples:**

**'Something 4 Nothing'** – a few years ago, the church donned red t-shirts and descended upon the Thanington estate with the simple, yet powerful offer to each household of giving them practical help in a multitude of ways. This ranged from taking rubbish to the dump, painting and decorating, clearing gardens and washing cars. This happened two years in a row and was in conjunction with the local council.

**'Church in the Park'** – for several summers we have taken our Sunday morning service to the Dane John Gardens public park in the centre of Canterbury. Live worship, puppet sketches, testimonies and gospel presentations have all characterised this time 'on the streets'.

**‘Love Canterbury’** – birthed out of the Tour de France 2007 coming to Canterbury. We decided to arrange a whole weekend of events designed to demonstrate our love for Jesus and this city he has placed us in. Thousands of strawberries and hot dogs were given out, live music, gospel presentations and a multitude of one-on-one conversations marked out this special event.

**Ongoing example:**

**‘The Xmas Factor’** – for four years now a Christmas puppet extravaganza has been put on, particularly led by Andrew Chevalier (our current full-time kids worker). Many hundreds of guests attended over a multitude of showings and it is an ever-growing highlight in the City Church calendar!

## **2. PROJECTS**

For the sake of ease, we are defining in this document ‘projects’ as things that we do that are focussed primarily outwards in serving the city. We will come onto ‘ministries’ in a while, which in contrast, are focussed primarily on inwardly serving the church family.

Outward Focus:

### **Alpha**

Introducing people to the Christian faith

### **Canterbury Debt Advice Centre**

Providing debt advice to those in financial difficulty

### **Coffee & Chaos**

A toddler and parent group

### **Counter Culture Youth (CCY)**

Our youth group for 11-18s

### **Deaflinks**

Linking the deaf community with God’s family

### **Kidz Klub**

An under 11s outreach program

### **Royal Oaks Community Support (ROCS)**

Providing family support.

### **Welcome Team**

Helping visitors to come into the church

## **Projects we partner in**

In addition to the projects that we lead directly as a church, we also are involved in partnership with other churches in supporting various inter-church projects. For example;

**Cantercare:** Cantercare is a local inter-church initiative that provides a temporary, supervised and supportive home for single pregnant women who are unable to stay with their families. We support this project financially, practically with personnel and with prayer.

**Canterbury Schools Trust:** The Canterbury Christian Schools Work Trust is a registered charity with trustees who oversee and direct the work with the support of local church leaders. At present we have one full-time worker serving the secondary schools and one part-time worker serving the primary schools. Our vision is to expand the work as God enables us through the giving of supporters.

### **3. Ministries**

#### **a). Ministries to serve in**

**Audio Visual (AV)**

Multimedia for the church

**Bookshop**

Resourcing the church with books, CDs and DVDs

**Catering**

Bringing food to people who want to eat it!

**Creche**

For under 3s on a Sunday Morning

**Impact**

A year of voluntary service to the church with theology training

**In.vision**

Our 18-30s program

**Mini Bus**

Providing transport for those who need it

**Ministry Team**

Praying for spiritual and physical breakthrough

**The Great Rotation**

Our 3-11s program

#### **b). Ministries to be served by**

**Family Time** - Family Time is a parenting course which studies informally all aspects of raising children in line with Biblical instructions and principles.

**MORE – MORE** is an engaging arena for people to study the Bible together, to ask questions and to grapple with God’s Word in a rigorous but dynamic way. Previous topics have included *The Synoptic Gospels*, *The Son of Man and the Temple of God*, *An Introduction to Isaiah*, *The Sermon on the Mount*, *An Overview of the Old Testament* and *The Doctrine of the Atonement*.

The course runs on Saturday mornings approximately every six weeks. It is free and is open to anyone with a genuine desire to get to God through studying His Word.

**Marriage Prep** – This is a 5 week course designed for couples who are engaged. It is a practical and honest course, using material from HTB’s marriage material.

**Women’s/Men’s Ministry** – As well as spending much time together, we believe there is real merit in both women and men gathering in a variety of ways to build relationships, grow in spiritual maturity and generally have fun! Recent examples include women’s Saturday morning breakfasts and women’s Sunday evenings of worship. The men recently went away for a couple of days in a muddy field, played football, rode quad bikes, shot guns, feasted on a hog roast and also worshipped a bit too.

AND FINALLY.....!

Stuff we do that’s just fun!!

- a). **Emerge** – is a growing programme of social events purely aimed at singles and couples moving into young adult life. Future examples include; curry nights, ice skating, beach trips and theatre nights out.
- b). **Men’s five a side football** – a variety of guys meet, run around and get very sweaty and pretend they are Wayne Rooney. Open to all.....boys
- d) **Hand in Hand** – Run by an assortment of amateur but very talented singers, ‘hand in hand’ is a group of men and women who share a passion for harmony! Great fun.

And finally....

## ALL ABOUT MEMBERSHIP - EXPECTATIONS

### **BUT CAN'T ANYONE BE A MEMBER?**

Yes and no. Like Jesus, the church should be outrageously inclusive - Jesus treated everyone as if they belonged and often got into trouble for it! So, we want people who may not yet **believe or behave** to feel a sense of **belonging**.

However, the biblical concept of membership is one of serious commitment and active involvement in God's own holy people (1 Pet 2). Therefore, when we speak of membership, we refer to those who have moved from merely feeling accepted and **blessed by** the body, to becoming those who are actually **part of** the body, and involved in the **building up of** the body.

### **LIKE A BODY...NOT A GOLF CLUB**

The bible speaks of the church as a body. In a car-crash, a person may be 'dismembered' and lose a hand. At this point, the hand ceases to be a member because it is no longer **giving** and **receiving** ministry. So it is with our church: membership is active and functional two-way traffic. It is not about filling in a form, rather it is about being thoroughly involved in the life of the body.

### **What am I joining?**

You are not joining a club, an institution or a building. Those who gathered to David at the Cave of Adullam were not joining a cave ... but a man! The 3000 in Acts 2 were added to the 12 apostles and the initial core of 120, not to a place or a logo. You are joining people.

To be more specific, you are joining the elders (leadership). Think about it, the elders of a church actually define the church; City Church is that group of people who have voluntarily chosen to follow the elders of the church, so it is important that you have a strong sense of calling and confidence towards the elders.

## 'City Foundations' in Jerusalem AD 33

**Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of sins, everyone of you, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit ... those who accepted his message were baptised and about 3000 were added to their number that day...and they devoted themselves to fellowship and the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2v38-41) (again, see Appendix 1)**

1. **Repent:** You must become a born again believer (if you aren't already)
2. **Baptised:** You need to be willing to be water baptised sometime soon (if you haven't already been)
3. **Receive the Holy Spirit:** You need to be in pursuit of ever-increasing fullness of the Spirit in your life
4. **Devoted to the leadership, sound doctrine and the people:** You will be *comfortable committing to the leaders, the doctrine and the people of the City Church Canterbury Church.*

## 'City Foundations' at The City Church Canterbury AD 2008

In addition to the above-mentioned prerequisites of salvation, water baptism and spirit baptism, membership is about being an active and functioning part of the body. Because you are unique you will of course have your own unique contribution to make (1 Cor 12v12-31), **but there are some things that all members do to express our togetherness.** These things include:

Our 5 Core Expectations of members:

- Being part of a **Sunday Meeting** (and part of a **Sunday Serving Team** that serves about once per month)
- Being part of a **Cell Group**
- Being **deliberate in community** and friend-making
- Being **financially committed** through giving monthly tithes and offerings to the church
- Being **joyfully submitted** to the leadership of the church

By joining us, you are basically signing up to help others be radical disciples and giving the rest of us permission to provoke you to a radical disciple for Jesus!

### Common Questions

1. **Is it OK to be in two churches?** Common sense says 'no'. You will have a split vision and all the tensions of trying to chase two rabbits at the same time. Possible

exceptions might include if you are a student who is temporarily living away from your hometown.

2. **My church doesn't have cell Groups. Can I be in one of your cell Groups but go to my church on Sunday?** Not for long. You would feel torn and uncomfortable.
3. **Do I have to do City Foundations before becoming a member?** Yes. It is important that everyone hear the full story before making such an important step.
4. **How will I know if God is calling me to join this church?** You will have an inner 'witness' that you should. You will want to. You will feel excited by the vision and people of the church. You will sense the presence of God in the church. You will feel challenged and stretched. And, you will understand that it is not a perfect church!
5. **What if I join the church but after a few weeks realise that I have made a mistake?** No problem. We will willingly release you from membership.

## APPENDIX I

### BAPTISM IN WATER

#### WHAT IS BAPTISM IN WATER?

Our word “baptism” comes from the Greek word “baptizo”. It is one of the few words in our English bibles that has never been translated properly into an English word, but has been left in its original form. This hasn’t always helped people to understand what baptism actually is so it has caused confusion, uncertainty and differences of opinion through most of church history.

The question to ask is not, “What does our church tradition say?” but “What do the Scriptures say?” It tells us how baptism is to be practised and what it really means. Be like the Bereans [**Acts 17:11**] ‘they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.’ It is important that we understand what baptism really is, and allow it to be something that brings life and grace to us rather than simply being a strange religious rite, empty of real meaning.

#### WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?

We believe that the biblical basis for baptism is that it is only for those who have already responded in faith to Jesus which is why it is sometimes called ‘believers baptism’. It follows repentance and faith [**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38**] and a person becoming a disciple [**Matthew 28:19**]. We never find the order reversed - check all the incidents of baptism in the New Testament e.g. the Philippian jailer’s family [**Acts 16:30-34**], where repentance and faith preceded baptism.

Baptism itself does not save us, but it is a powerful sign and declaration of saving faith.

#### WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED IN WATER?

1. Because Jesus was baptised [**Matthew 3:16**].
2. Because Jesus told us to be baptised [**Matthew 28:19**].

*If these were the only two reasons that the bible gave us to be baptised, then surely this would be enough reason to get baptised – after all, Christians are by definition those who imitate Jesus [1 **John 2:6**] and obey Jesus [**John 14:15**]!*

3. The disciples baptised people [**John 4:1-2**].
4. Peter said we should be baptised [**Acts 2:38**].
5. Peter and John expected that all new believers would be baptised [**Acts 8:16**].
6. Philip endorsed it by baptising the Ethiopian [**Acts 8:38**].

7. Paul himself was baptised [**Acts 9:18**].
8. Paul expected that all believers had been baptised...and he made sure just in case they were not [**Acts 19:1-5**].
9. Paul often references baptism in his theological writings. Clearly water baptism was a huge deal for Paul, and his assumption was that all believers had been water baptised [**Romans 6:3; I Corinthians 1:13-17; I Corinthians 10:2; I Corinthians 12:13; I Corinthians 15:29; Galatians 3:27**].
10. Peter also references baptism in his theological writings [**I Peter 3:20-21**].

## **HOW SHOULD WATER BAPTISM HAPPEN?**

### **1. With Lots of Water**

The Greek word *baptizo* means, ‘*to plunge, dip, immerse, submerge, sink and drown*’. There is an expectation in the word itself that the person being baptised is completely immersed in water. In the New Testament accounts of baptism we can see that it always seemed to happen where there was lots of water, normally *in* a river. John the Baptist needed plenty of water to do the job [**John 3:23**]! With Jesus baptism it says that ‘*he came up out of the water*’ [**Mark 1:10**]. Also with Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch [**Acts 8:38-39**] the text states that ‘*they both went down into the water*’ and ‘*they came up out of the water*’.

The person getting baptised was not sprinkled but was baptised – plunged, dipped, immersed. This was not because there is some magic about the amount of water used, but because of what the water symbolises. Water baptism represents our joining with Jesus in his burial and resurrection - a symbolism which sprinkling misses entirely [**Romans 6:3-4**].

### **2. With lots of people watching**

Most of the biblical accounts of baptism occur in public places. Think of the masses getting baptised in the Jordan River like Jesus did, and thousands of new believers in Acts 2. Furthermore, as baptism is a public declaration of your faith in Jesus, then you will want to do it with a variety of believers and unbelievers watching. Most people find that the best way is to be baptised during a Sunday meeting...but be sure to make it a ‘guest service’ to ensure that there are the maximum possible number of unbelievers present.

### **3. Who actually does the baptising?**

Church leaders (elders, pastors or cell group leaders) are the ones who normally carry out baptisms, although it is often great for believing friends or family to be part of the action. It

is also great for the believer who ‘won you to Christ’ to be involved, rather like Philip was with his Ethiopian convert.

## **WHAT DOES WATER BAPTISM ACHIEVE?**

### **Remember, baptism is not necessary for salvation...**

We see this in the account of the thief who was crucified next to Jesus but before he died put his faith in Jesus. Clearly, the thief was not baptised, but Jesus said to him, ‘*Today you will be with me in paradise*’ [Luke 23:43]. However, this exceptional case should not make us think that baptism is somehow optional for Christians...

### **But baptism is an essential aspect of salvation...**

We need to understand that it is part of the normal order of salvation and without baptism we are missing out on an important part of God’s grace to us. As baptism is a command of Jesus, it is necessary if we are to be obedient to him. Jesus instructed his disciples, ‘*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*’ [Matthew 28:19].

### **What are the direct benefits to me of being baptised?**

1. The pleasure of knowing that I have **imitated and obeyed** Jesus.
2. **Courage and boldness:** many people testify that once they ‘nailed their colours to the mast’ through public baptism, they experienced a new courage and boldness in living for Jesus. Baptism strengthens and encourages our faith.
3. **Encouragement for believers:** it is a great source of joy and strength for fellow believers who watch you being baptised – it is visible proof of the advance of God’s kingdom.
4. **Testimony to unbelievers:** baptism is a powerful visual picture to unbelievers of the gospel. Make sure you bring your friends and family along!
5. **Initiation:** baptism is a ceremony of initiation (admission to membership). However, we are not baptised ‘into a denomination’ but ‘into Christ’ and thus into his Body the Church. Neither are we being baptised into the City Church Canterbury nor the church in which you were baptised if you have been baptised already.
6. **Being Sealed:** It’s like the circumcision of Abraham – a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith [Romans 4:11]. Paul then links circumcision and baptism [Colossians 2:11-12]. Baptism itself does not make us a Christian, it seals the fact that we have already been saved.

7. **Being Cleansed:** we are saved by *'the washing of regeneration'* [Titus 3:5(b)-6]. Baptism reminds us that we are now to live as a cleansed person. Ananias said to Paul *'rise and be baptized and wash away your sins'* [Acts 22:16].
  
8. **Being United with Christ in His Death and Resurrection:** *'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life'* [Romans 6:1-4].  
  
 When you **go down** in the water you are saying: 'Lord Jesus, You died on the cross for me. From now on, my old life is dead. I've broken with sin.'  
  
 When you are **under** the water you are saying: 'Lord, just as You were buried in the tomb, so my old sinful life is now buried in the water. This baptism is my funeral.'  
  
 When you are **lifted out** of the water you are saying: 'Lord, You were raised from the dead by God's power, and by that power I can now live a totally new life.'
  
9. **Having a clear conscience:** before God we are confident that nothing condemns us, accuses us or obstructs our ability to relate freely with him as our Father. All guilt has been removed [1 Peter 3:21].

## COMMON QUESTIONS

### What if my parents are not happy about me getting baptised?

Then it is usually best to leave the matter until you have the freedom to make these decisions for yourself. Chat to one of the elders about it.

### What if my previous baptism was not meaningful for me?

Chat to your pastor about it, but it is usually best to get baptised again in a way that is meaningful for you.

(Adapted from 'Get Baptised' – PJ Smyth and 'Foundations' – John Groves)

## **BAPTISM IN WATER AND MEMBERSHIP**

Since we believe that the New Testament teaches and demonstrates that the mode of baptism is only the immersion of a believer in water (as set out above), we therefore regard all other practices of baptism as not meeting the Biblical description. Yet, while not taking these differences lightly, we would not elevate them to the level of what is essential. Thus, we will welcome into membership candidates who, after a time of study, discussion, and prayer, prescribed by the Elders, retain a conviction that it would be a *violation of their conscience* to be baptized by immersion as believers. This conviction of conscience must be based on a plausible, intelligible, Scripturally-based argument rather than on mere adherence to a tradition or family expectations. All candidates for membership, even when holding firmly to views different from the official position of the elders, must demonstrate a humble and teachable disposition with respect to the church leadership.

We will not admit into membership persons who refuse to practice any form of baptism at all, or who believe that their water baptism caused their regeneration. The former is a serious rejection of the Lord's commandment, and the latter is a serious misunderstanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration is not the result of water baptism or any outward ritual.

If you have been baptised by immersion as a believer then you do not have to be baptised again to become a member. Baptism was never intended as a sign of joining a *local* church.

(Adapted from 'Baptism and Church Membership at Bethlehem Baptist Church - Eight Recommendations for Constitutional Revision' prepared by John Piper with Alex Chediak and Tom Steller)

## **THE PRACTICAL BIT! – WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT YOUR BAPTISM**

- Here at The City Church Canterbury we baptise people in a portable baptistery at Canterbury High School, as part of a normal Sunday service.

The dates of the next baptism services are available from the Church Offices ([info@thecitychurch.org.uk](mailto:info@thecitychurch.org.uk), 01227 455440) or in Update

Your baptism is a very public event - which of your family and friends do you want to invite? It is also a great opportunity to invite those friends and family who are currently unsaved. Why not consider having a meal together afterwards.

- During the meeting, you will be asked to tell everyone your story so it is worth preparing this in advance and running through with someone. This can be very short and we would suggest aiming for about 3 minutes. Some good things to include:
  - How did you become a Christian?
  - What difference has it made in your life?
  - Why are you getting baptised?
  - How do you feel about Jesus now?

- On the day you can wear whatever you like however dark clothes are best as white often goes see through when wet! Trousers and shorts are better than skirts too. Don't forget to bring a change of clothes and a towel with you.
- Don't worry if you feel a little nervous on the day as it's very normal. Most people watching will have been baptised themselves and remember how it feels. Everyone will be supporting you and excited for you.
- Show up early and check in with the meeting leader.
- After hearing the stories of those being baptised there will be a talk which will include an explanation of baptism and a presentation of the gospel as there is an expectation of a significant number of non-Christians.
- Next, we'll go to the area where the baptistery will be set up. All the church will stand around and watch and you'll get into the water with the people who are baptising you. Normally it is OK to take photographs and/or video the even and we will inform you if it is not possible to do this.
- They will ask you to hold your hands together in front of your chest (easier to hold you!) and they will also hold you around your shoulders. Your baptiser might then ask you if Jesus is lord in your life, and they will say, 'I baptise you into Jesus in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'
- You'll be immersed under the water and brought back up to huge applause! There will be an opportunity for one or two people to pray for you at this point. It would be helpful if you would identify someone who is ready with your towel when you step out of the baptistery to get you dry as soon as possible.
- After everyone has been baptised there will also be a time for people, in smaller groups, to pray for you and to share with you anything they feel God wants you to know. Maybe you could ask a friend to write these down for you as people say them?
- We don't have access to actual changing rooms so currently you can use the toilets to get changed.

Theological reasons for why Mars Hill preaches out of the ESV

by Pastor Mark Driscoll

1. The ESV upholds the truth that Scripture is the very words of God, not just the thoughts of God.

This point is inextricably connected to the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration, which means that God the Holy Spirit inspired not just the thoughts of Scripture but the very words and details. For example, the biblical theme of ‘walking’ with God begins early in the book of Genesis. There we discover that whole generations, such as Noah’s, as well as whole cities, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, did not walk with God. But Genesis is careful to make note of those people who did walk closely with God, such as Enoch (5:24) and Noah (6:9). Likewise, in the New Testament we are told to also ‘walk’ in a manner worthy of God and some translations say this exactly in places such as 1 Thessalonians 2:12 (ESV, NASB, KJV, NKJV, HCSB). But other translations take the liberty of instead saying we should ‘live lives’ worthy of God (CEV, NIV, NLT, TNIV).

This point is significant because the Bible repeatedly declares that the very words of God are important, not just the thoughts they convey, as the following examples illustrate:

- Exodus 19:6 ‘. . . you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.’
- Deuteronomy 32:46–47 ‘Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.’
- Proverbs 30:5–6 Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.
- Matthew 4:4 ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”
- Luke 21:33 ‘Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.’
- John 6:63 ‘It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.’
- John 17:8 ‘For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.’
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.
- Revelation 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’
- Revelation 22:18–19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

2. The ESV upholds that what is said must be known before what is meant can be determined.

Before we can interpret the meaning of Scripture, we must first accurately understand the message of Scripture. Or, to put it another way, only after knowing what Scripture says can

we understand what it means. Practically, this requires that Bible translations be separate from and prior to Bible commentaries. A word-for-word translation best enables this to occur by seeking, as much as possible, to not insert interpretive commentary into the translated text of Scripture; rather, it lets the text breathe as a living word and speak for itself. The general problem with thought-for-thought translations and paraphrases is that their English interpreters include commentary that is not part of the original text and thereby commingle Bible and Bible commentary. For the average reader, this is problematic because they do not know which parts of their Bible are from the original text and which parts have been added by commentators who were trying to convey their interpretation of its meaning.

### 3. The ESV upholds the truth that words carry meaning.

Some scholars will argue that thought-for-thought and paraphrase translations do not change the meaning of Scripture but just the words of Scripture in an effort to clarify the meaning of Scripture. But this reasoning is fallacious because meaning is carried in words. Therefore, when we change the words of Scripture we are changing the meaning of Scripture. For this reason, when we handle other important documents we do not take the liberty to change their words. For example, an attorney is not free to change the words of a signed contract, a husband is not free to rewrite his vows of promise after his wedding, and a public notary is not free to make alterations to the words of a signed legal document. We would be rightly worried if such liberties were taken with our personal affairs and should be even more worried when such liberties are taken with God's affairs. In this way, word-for-word translations like the ESV are following the directives of I Corinthians 4:6, which admonishes us 'not to go beyond what is written,' and Proverbs 30:5–6, which warns, 'Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.'

### 4. The ESV upholds the theological nomenclature of Scripture.

One of the more popular arguments for thought-for-thought translations and paraphrases is that people do not understand the theological nomenclature that Scripture uses to express doctrinal concepts. The reasoning follows that words like 'justification' and 'propitiation,' which the original text of Scripture used, should be replaced with more modern vernacular that people can understand. To illustrate this point two examples will be helpful.

First, one of the central debates of the Protestant Reformation was how a sinful person is justified before a holy and righteous God. This issue was so contentious that people died over it and Christianity split over it; it is not a trivial matter. Romans 3:24 is one of many places where 'justification' is spoken of in the original text of Scripture. An examination of various translations, however, shows how the word is sometimes omitted altogether:

- (ESV) justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . .
- (NASB) justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus . . .
- (NIV) justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- (TNIV) justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- (KJV) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
- (NKJV) being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
- (CEV) God treats us much better than we deserve, and because of Christ Jesus, he freely accepts us and sets us free from our sins.

- (TM) Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.
- (NLT) Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Some of these translations (CEV, TM, NLT) would perhaps not be problematic if they were presented as commentary on Romans 3:24. But they are simply unfit to be the biblical text of Romans 3:24 because they do not say what God the Holy Spirit said through Paul; the reader would have no way of knowing that they were reading commentary instead of Scripture.

Second, in the fall of 2005 I preached a three-month series called 'Christ on the Cross' (available at [www.marshallchurch.org](http://www.marshallchurch.org) for free). That series looked at what Jesus accomplished for us through His death on the cross. One of the sermons focused explicitly on the biblical doctrine of propitiation. In that sermon I explained how God's wrath is mentioned nearly six hundred times in the Old Testament by some twenty words, in addition to its occurrences in the New Testament. I then explained how the biblical word 'propitiation' literally means that Jesus Christ stood in my place and suffered and died for my sins, thereby propitiating or averting the just wrath of God away from me. Because other translations have entirely removed the word that God chose to explain the work of Jesus, I used the ESV translation of the verses for that sermon.

- Romans 3:23–25 . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness . . .
- Hebrews 2:17 Therefore he Jesus had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- I John 2:2 He Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- I John 4:10 . . . this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

In the NIV and NRSV these verses do not say propitiation at all, but rather 'sacrifice' or 'atonement.' Worse still are the RSV and NEB, which say 'expiation' instead of 'propitiation.' These latter two translations change the entire meaning of the verse because propitiation deals with my penalty for sin whereas expiation deals with my cleansing from sin. While the doctrines are related, they are distinct and to confuse them is to make a major theological error.

The question begs to be answered: why should we stop with only some theological words that the average person does not understand? The sad truth is that we live in a culture that has very little biblical knowledge and many if not most of the central words that Scripture uses are not understood by the average person. For example, in a place like Seattle, where there are less Christians than dogs, the average person probably has little if any biblical understanding of what is meant by basic words such as 'God,' 'sin,' and 'Jesus.' By way of illustration, I was once writing an article for a non-Christian newspaper and in my column I said that God had convicted me of a sin in my life. The editor responded that I would need

to explain what conviction meant because they were not familiar with the word and assumed my readers would not know what I was talking about. Why? Because outside of Christianity even something as simple as conviction is not understood.

My point in all of this is that words open up worlds of new truths, much like a link on a website ushers us into an entirely new realm. Therefore, if people do not know the words of Scripture, we should not give them new words that close off new truths. Rather, we should give them the old words of the original text, literally translated into English, so that a new world of truth can be opened to them. Because we love the people God entrusts to our care, we who preach and teach Scripture should strive to explain the words that they do not understand so that they can fully appreciate what God is saying to them through Scripture.

5. The ESV upholds the truth that while Scripture is meant for all people, it cannot be communicated in such a way that all people receive it.

Scripture teaches us that God loves the whole world (John 3:16) and that we should seek to reach as many people as possible (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Subsequently, the desire to make the Bible understandable so that more people can learn about Jesus is something that every Christian should wholeheartedly agree to.

However, we must remember that we cannot change the words of Scripture because God has called us to not only communicate widely, but also communicate truthfully. We must accept that not all Scripture is easy to understand for many reasons. First of all, we are sinners. Consequently, we sometimes suppress the truth we do receive because we disagree with Scripture and are unwilling to repent. The problem is a hard heart and not just a difficult translation (Romans 1:28). On this point, perhaps Mark Twain said it best, ‘Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand.’ Second, God’s thoughts are much higher than our own (Isaiah 55:9). Third, God has secrets that He has not revealed to us (Deuteronomy 29:29). Fourth, we sometimes see the truth dimly and know it in part (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Furthermore, even the greatest of communicators were known to be hard to understand when they spoke God’s truth. For example, some of Jesus’ teaching was declared to be a ‘hard saying’ by His hearers (John 6:60). Jesus also taught in parables, knowing that His teaching would not be readily understood by all his hearers, but only those with ‘ears to hear’ (Mark 4:10–23). Speaking of Paul’s writings, around which controversy continues to swirl today, Peter said, ‘And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures’ (2 Peter 3:15–16).

We should make every effort to have the Bible translated in words that as many people as possible can understand. But we must also be careful not to cross a line where we change God’s words in hopes that more people will be willing to accept them. Apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit working in us, there is no way we can gladly receive the truth. Even with the Holy Spirit, some parts of Scripture remain for us ‘hard to understand,’ as they were even for Peter, who was trained by Jesus and himself penned Scripture.

Therefore, the pursuit of all Bible translation and teaching must be both accessibility to the reader and accuracy to God the Holy Spirit who inspired the writings of Scripture. Indeed, much of what passes today as a criticism of the clarity of Scripture is little more than the self-condemnation of those with blind eyes caused by hard hearts. The church father Athanasius spoke of this with great pastoral insight, saying, 'For the searching and right understanding of the Scriptures there is need of a good life and pure soul, and for Christian virtue to guide the mind to grasp, so far as human nature can, the truth concerning God the Word. One cannot possibly understand the teaching of the saints unless one has a pure mind and is trying to imitate their life.'

#### 6. The ESV upholds the complementarian nature of gender in Scripture.

Unbeknownst to the average Bible-reading Christian, there is a great debate raging in academic circles about the language of gender and how it relates to biblical translation. The argument is commonly made that in generations past people used the word 'man' or 'mankind' to refer to humanity in general as an all-encompassing term that included both men and women. But, it is said, the understanding of these words has changed so that in the minds of the average person today it refers only to males and excludes females.

I would, however, argue that the general assumption is not clear. For example, one of the most widely known feminist icons of our era is Madonna. Curiously, in defense of the mock-crucifixion she staged at the end of each concert during her \$193.7 million-grossing 2006 Confessions tour, she said she struck the pose 'to encourage mankind to help one another and to see the world as a unified whole. I believe in my heart that if Jesus were alive today he would be doing the same thing.' The two striking things about the quote are that Madonna is apparently unaware that Jesus is alive today and that she referred to the human race by the masculine pronoun 'mankind.' This illustrates my point that it is still common for people to understand words like 'man' and 'mankind' as a reference to both males and females. Furthermore, it is God who called the human race 'man' in Genesis 5:1 (ESV, NIV, NASB, TAB, KJV, NKJV, HCSB) and not the 'human race' (TM) or 'human beings' (TNIV, NLT, CEV).

Psalm 8:4 serves as yet another practical example of the varying ways that differing translations take liberties with the clear text of Scripture regarding the issue of gender. The original text simply says 'man,' yet some translations take the liberty to deviate from that markedly:

- (ESV) What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
- (NASB) What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?
- (NIV) What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?
- (TNIV) What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?
- (KJV) What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
- (NKJV) What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?
- (CEV) Then I ask, 'Why do you care about us humans? Why are you concerned for us weaklings?'

- (TM) What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?
- (NLT) What are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us?

It must be pointed out that, in its more insidious forms, the push for gender-neutral language is in fact a clear push against Scripture. For example, Scripture states that God made us ‘male and female’ (for example, Genesis 1:27). Consequently, in God’s created order, there is both equality between men and women (because both are His image-bearers) and distinction (because men and women have differing roles). This position is called complementarianism and teaches that men and women, though equal, are also different in some ways and therefore function best together in a complementary way, like a right hand and left hand (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22–33; Colossians 3:18–19; 1 Timothy 2:8–3:13). But those with a feminist and/or homosexual agenda are seeking to eradicate the created distinction between males and females so as to validate new alternative lifestyles that are not acceptable according to Scripture. Translations such as the New Revised Standard accommodate this by wrongly translating ‘male and female’ in Genesis 1:27 as the androgynous ‘humankind.’ The New Living Bible translates it as the genderless ‘people.’ There are many reasons why all of this matters to Bible translation.

First, there is pressure from some theological teams to change the masculine language that Scripture uses in favor of more feministic and/or gender-neutral language that is not the language of the original text. Translations that use gender-neutral language include the NRSV, TNIV, NLT, NCV, GNB, and CEV.

Second, even more insidious is the effort by some to feminize God. Perhaps the worst example of this is a recent translation released by a group of fifty-two biblical ‘scholars’ called The Bible in a More Just Language. In an effort to remove what the group sees as unjust treatment of women and homosexuals, God the Father is now ‘our Mother and Father’ and Jesus is no longer the Son of God but rather the ‘child’ of God. Satan, of course, is still referred to as male.

Theologically speaking, God does not have a biological gender because God is Spirit, without physical anatomy (John 4:24), and is therefore not a man (Numbers 23:19). In using the word ‘He,’ the Bible is not saying that God is merely a man, but rather that God is a unique person who reveals Himself with terms such as ‘Father’ when speaking about Himself. By way of analogy, John Calvin said that God uses terms such as ‘Father’ to speak to us in baby talk, much like a parent uses words that their young child can understand in order to effectively communicate with them. Jesus said ‘Our Father’ when he gave us our model of how to pray. Therefore, referring to God as Father is not an antiquated oppression from a patriarchal culture, but an echo of the prayer life of Jesus. It is the predominant way in which God has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

Third, we acknowledge that Scripture does infrequently refer to God in terms that are more feminine in nature, such as a hen who cares for her chicks (Matthew 23:37). Nonetheless, such language is both infrequent and metaphorical because God is no more a woman than God is a chicken.

In conclusion, God created mankind ‘male and female’ (Genesis 1:27; 5:2). We must not bend to the pressures of an androgynous culture that would oppose His created order and

refer to men and women as anything less than simply 'man,' as God does (Genesis 5:1). We must likewise not bend to the pressure to recognize God as someone other than 'our Father' because that is the primary means He has chosen to reveal Himself to us. Simply, God the Father commands all who disagree with Him on this point to repent of their nonsense rather than revise His name