

Friendship Class



*Building A Loving Community That Follows Christ
To Reach Our Community That is Lost Without Him*

Friendship Class

CLASS PURPOSE The purpose of the Friendship Class is to help you become more acquainted with the mission, ministries and people of Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church. It is also an opportunity to get to know others in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. It is our desire that as you go through this class you will enjoy the experiences and express your opinions and thoughts and begin to make new friends.

GOALS

1. To Learn More About Who You Are... To create a forum in which we get to know each other better and begin to build relationships. To give us an opportunity to understand your identity, answer your questions, find out your interests, your gifts, your needs, how we can serve you and where you fit in helping us fulfill our mission?

Objectives:

To begin to develop new friendships To understand your interests, gifts and calling so we can help you plug into ministry at Oakbrook.

2. To Allow You to Learn More About Who We Are...

Where We Are Going and How We Plan to Get There

To give newcomers and prospective members an opportunity to understand the identity of Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church. What is the Evangelical Free Church? What is Oakbrook's identity: mission, vision, strategy, values, philosophy of ministry.

Objectives:

To provide each person with an overview of the Evangelical Free Church and Oakbrook

To check signals and make sure we are on the same page.

To examine the biblical basis for Oakbrook's 12-point Statement of Faith

To teach the mission, vision, values, philosophy of ministry of Oakbrook

3. To give people a systematic process to move from regular attendance at Oakbrook to being committed to the mission and ministry of Oakbrook.

Objectives:

To show the Scriptural way individuals become a part of God's family. To help participants understand the process and responsibilities of membership at Oakbrook. To give participants an opportunity to apply for membership in OFC.

Friendship

WEEK 1: FRIENDSHIP

ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST

ICE BREAKERS

Go around the group and share your answers to the following questions: Where were you living between the ages of 7 and 12 and what were the winters like?

How did you heat your house during this time?

What was the center of warmth in your life during this time? (This can be a place in the house, a time of year or a person.)

Briefly share about a childhood friend and friendship.

FRIENDSHIP

Friends come from many places to find a place in our hearts. Some develop over trivia or some common interest or activity. Sometimes God plants someone in our path to allow us to develop a friendship we would never have chosen ourselves. Often friendships sneak up on us. They are unexpected, unsought and unplanned.

We would probably all admit that true friendship is hard to come by. Developing friendships take time. They mysteriously involve 'chemistry'. They often involve pain. Some might say they have no use for a friend. "I'm too busy." or "It's too painful." But if we were honest we all need friendship.

Ken Druck in his book, *The Secrets Men Keep* says, "Men's relationships with other men are generally characterized by thinness, insincerity, and even chronic weariness. Since most men don't let themselves think or feel about friendship, this immense and collective disappointment is usually concealed, sloughed over, or shrugged away." A politician once confessed, "Sure, I've got buddies. Lots of buddies. And we couldn't get too much done without coming to each other. But they're not my friends. You can't afford friends when you want to get things done. I have allies. I have enemies. And I have family. But I have no friends."

Walter Winchell defined a friend this way. "A friend is someone who walks in when the rest of the world walks out." Anne Beatts said, "A friend is someone you can call in the middle of the night when your man is gone, or you wish he would go, or you suspect your cellulite is winning or even just to prove to yourself that there is someone you can call in the middle of the night."

1. How do you define a friend or friendship? Share 'key words' that define friendship.
2. **Read** 1 Samuel 18:1. Share your observations/thoughts about this verse.
3. **Read Proverbs** 17:17; 18:24; 19:4,6-7 and discuss meaning and application.
4. Read Matthew 11:19. According to this verse what does friendship involve?

5. **Read** John 15:9-17 and answer the following questions:
 What time is it in Christ's life? In your opinion how important is Christ's message about friendship for his disciples?...for you personally?
 From this passage finish this sentence: Friendship is built on
6. According to John 15:13,15 what does genuine friendship involve? (See also: Ex 33:11; Amos 3:3)
7. Friendship among Christians has a dimension other friendships do not have. **Read John** 15:15. According to this verse what is part of the uniqueness of friendship among Christians? In your opinion what is the difference between friendship and fellowship?
8. **Review** John 15:16-17. Jesus seems to tie loving one another to friendship and friendship to discipleship. In your opinion what is the connection, if any, between friendship and discipleship?

Concluding thoughts:

1. Am I a friend? Do I have a real friend? Am I open to friendship?
"Oh Lord, this is my prayer..."
2. What is one or two steps I could take to be a friend or make a friend at Oakbrook?

Dinah Marie Mulock

"Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person. Having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words, but pouring them all right out -- just as they are, chaff and grain together -- certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keeping what is worth keeping and with the breath of kindness blowing the rest away. "

Elisa Morgan

"In spite of the difficulties there are delights. How refreshing to drink at the well of another's relationship with God or learn lessons for yourself in the lessons God has taught someone else! How profitable to view the world through someone else's eyes and never look at life again in quite the same way!"

Alan McGinnis writes

"Deep friendship requires cultivation over the years -- evenings before the fire, long walks together and lots of time for talks. It requires keeping the television off so that the two of you can log in with each other... getting close to a few people is more important than being popular enough to receive 400 Christmas cards every year. "

Project: Before coming to next week's study take some time and draw a "life map". Use the paper provided and draw the high points, low points, change points and 'defining moments' of your life.

Don't worry about whether or not you are artistic. The point is 'your story' and not how well you can draw.

Grace

GRACE

Being Sure of your Relationship With God

ICEBREAKERS

Have you come to the place in your life where you know for sure that you are going to heaven? In your own words define what it means to be a real Christian. Do you ever experience doubts about being a real Christian?

At Oakbrook we are first and foremost committed to helping people know for sure they are in God's Forever Family. It is so easy for people and churches to focus on church membership. At Oakbrook our first priority is to help people know they are really Christians and that they are right with God. The simplicity of the Good News (Gospel) of Jesus Christ is explained on the next couple of pages. We trust this is helpful.

A. God created you and I to have a personal relationship with Him.

1. God created us in His own image. (Genesis 1:27)
2. God loves us. (Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10)
3. God wants us to know and love Him. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Why is it then that most people are not experiencing a personal relationship with God? The Bible says it is because...

False Assurances of Salvation

1. "I believe in God."

It is really rather silly to think that just believing in God will bring about our salvation – as if saying "Yes God, I know you are there" is doing Him a big favor. To merely believe in God merely places us on the same level of agreement with Satan and his followers.

"You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder." James 2:19

What about sin? How can mental assent to the existence of God wash away the guilt of our sins? All we have done at this point is to acknowledge that the officers who pulled us over for speeding really do exist. But who pays the fine for the speeding ticket?

2. "I was baptized or confirmed."

Nowhere in the Bible does ceremony give spiritual status. Ceremony celebrates what has happened, but it doesn't make it happen. A wedding band can symbolize a marriage, but it can't make you married.

3. "I attend church, give money, pray, etc."

Well then, why don't these works give enough assurance to a person that he / she is right with God?

The answer has again reduced salvation to something we do. If it is something you earn, you never know how much is enough. What if I am short one good deed? What if I sinned one time too many?

Ephesians 2:8-9

4. "I'm a good person."

What mistakes is a person making who takes comfort in this reason for getting into heaven? At least two big mistakes. 1) The nature of his goodness. Jesus makes it clear in Luke 18:19 that no one is good except God alone. We only have 'relative' goodness in comparing ourselves to others around us. 2. The nature of God's holiness. Standing on earth in God's presence without getting 'zapped,' is not the same as standing in God's presence in heaven.

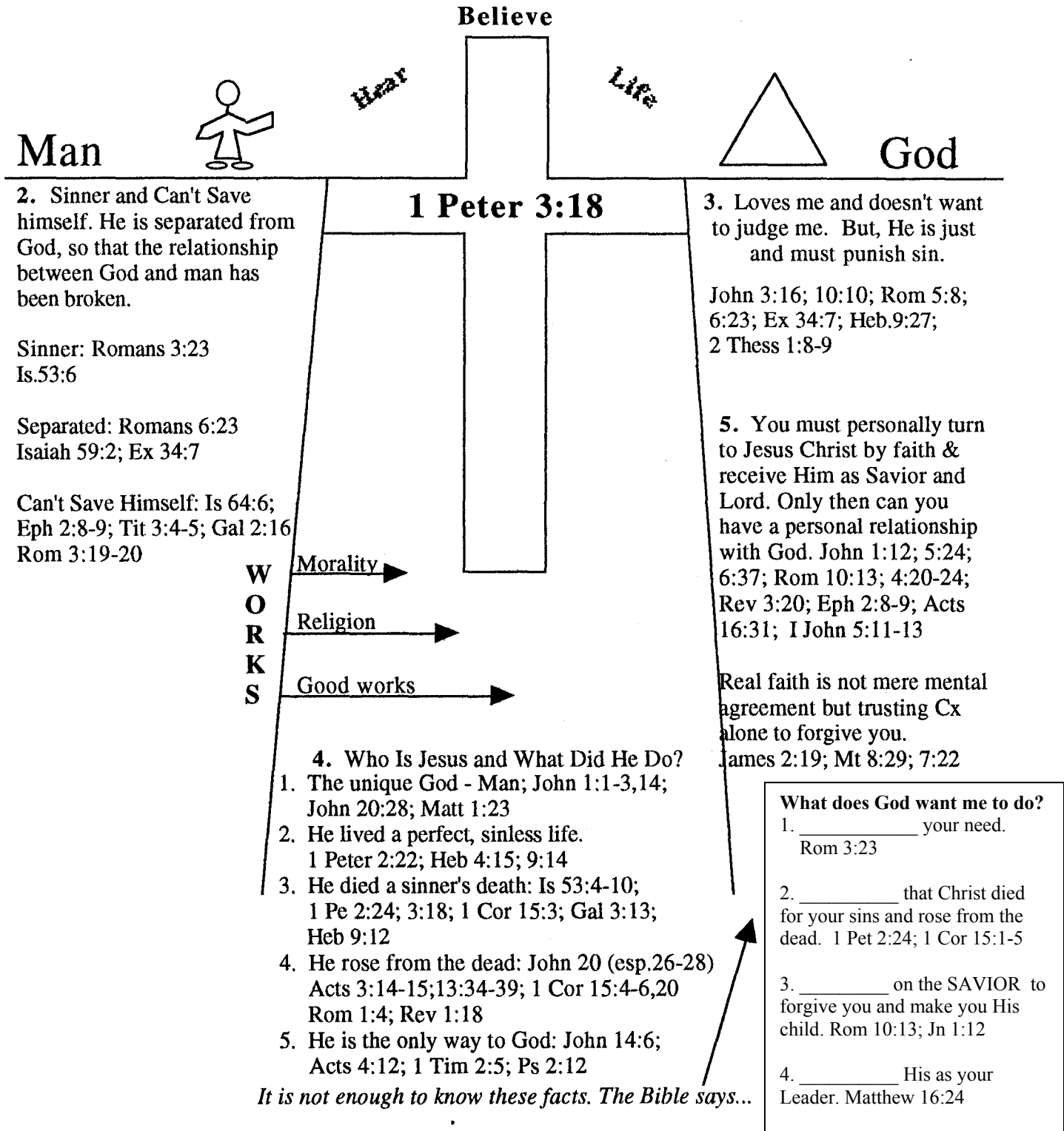
The Good News

Introduction:

1. What is your definition of a real Christian?
2. Have you become a Christian or are you still on your way?
3. Have you come to the place where you know for sure that if you were to die to would go to heaven?
If you were to die today and God were to say to you, 'Why should I left you into my heaven?'
What would you say?

The Problem and Solution

1. God created us to have a personal relationship with Him.
Gen 1:27; 3:8-10; Jere 31:3; Deut 6:5; John 3:16; 10:14, 27-28; 17:3; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor.11:2-3



THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL
(For a personal Bible study.)

Heaven is a free gift. We can't earn it and we don't deserve it. - Rom. 6:23

Rom. 6:23

Eph. 2:8-9

PUTTING It Into Words

Rom. 5

Tit. 3:5

I am a sinner and can't save myself

Is. 53:6

Jer. 17:9.

Rom. 3:10, 19-20 _23

Tit. 3:5,

Eph. 2:9

Prov. 14:12

God is love and doesn't want to punish us. I John 4:8 God is just and must judge sin. Ex. 34:7

John 3:16 I

Tim. 2:4 II

Peter 3:9

Jesus: Who He Is - God in the flesh.

John 1:1

Is. 9:6; 40:3

John 20:28

What He has done: Died for us.

Is; 53:6,4

I Peter 3:18

Faith:

Not mere intellectual agreement; not temporal faith

James 2:19; Mt. 8:29

Trusting Christ alone for forgiveness

Reliance on Christ - Faith Alone

Rom. 4:5

Acts 16:31

Gal. 2:21

John 6:47

Eph. 2:8-9

John 3:36

Titus .: 3 : 5-6

Eph. 2 : 89

The Commitment

John 1:12

John 5:24

Acts 10:42-43

Decision verses: Romans 10:13; Acts 16:31

Personal 'Faith Story'
TESTIMONY WORK SHEET

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE:

BEFORE I RECEIVED CHRIST I LIVED AND THOUGHT THIS WAY:

HOW I RECEIVED CHRIST:

AFTER I RECEIVED CHRIST THESE CHANGES TOOK PLACE:

CONCLUDING STATEMENT (and favorite Scripture verse for g Christian Audience):

How to Write Your Personal "Faith Story"

Personal Testimony Format

I. My life before I became a Christian

- A. Religious beliefs and practices
- B. Lifestyle
- C. Ambitions and goals
- D. Academic training
- E. Philosophy of life
- F. Contentment level
- G. Purpose and meaning in life
- H. Any crisis that impacted your life
- I. Your notion of yourself as a sinner
- J. What sin meant to you
- K. Who you thought God was
- L. Others – if you grew up in a Christian home simply relate what you learned and understood about God, Christ and the Good News and your relationship with God.

II. How I became a Christian

- A. Was it a dynamic experience or a gradual awakening of my need for Christ or both?
- B. Did a crisis lead to conversion?
- C. Who was involved in leading you to Christ?
- D. Were you searching for Christ?
- E. Had you been reading the Bible?
- F. Had you been going to church?
- G. What other things were involved in your conversion experience?
- H. If you grew up hearing the Gospel, how did you come to an assurance of salvation and your relationship with Christ?

III. Since I became a Christian

- A. Describe the change that Christ has made in your life - spiritually, morally, sociologically.
- B. How have you changed?
- C. How has your conception of God changed?
- D. Are there any difficult times that God has gotten you through?
- E. What are your goals, ambitions, and dreams since you have become a Christian?
- F. What difference has Jesus Christ made in your life?
- G. What are your priorities in life?
- H. Is there a Scripture that is really important to you - life verse?

Helpful Hints For Writing Your Testimony

- Don't blast a church or denomination.
- Don't use words people often don't understand like hallelujah or phrases like "saved by the blood" unless you are going to explain their significance.
- Be careful in relating your life as a "sinner" - do not exaggerate or try to be too sensational.
- Relate in your faith story what the Scriptures say about what is necessary to become a Christian. Feel free to read or quote God's Word - a few choice Scriptures.
- It is desirable that your testimony convey enough of God's truth so that someone who hears your testimony could himself/herself come to know the Savior.

Helpful Hints for Presenting Your Testimony

- Your testimony should glorify God.
- Do not exceed 5 minutes. (concise - no rambling)
- Try to memorize your testimony, but if you need notes, use index cards to jot down reminders.
- Ask God to give you a positive and joyful spirit when you present your testimony.

THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

- Baptism is a symbol of a Christian's identification by faith in the _____
_____ and _____ of Jesus Christ.

*"OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT ALL OF US WHO WERE **BAPTIZED** INTO CHRIST JESUS WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH ? WE WERE THEREFORE **BURIED** WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH IN ORDER THAT, JUST AS CHRIST WAS **RAISED FROM THE DEAD** THROUGH THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, WE TOO MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE. " - ROMANS 6:3-4*

- Baptism is a symbolic expression of your personal _____ in _____ for forgiveness.

Acts 10:43, 47-48 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.... Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

2. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

- Every person who puts his/her trust in Christ for _____ should be baptized.

SEE ABOVE - ACTS 10:43-48

"AS THEY TRAVELED ALONG THE ROAD, THEY CAME TO SOME WATER AND THE EUNUCH SAID, 'LOOK, HERE IS WATER. WHY SHOULDN'T I BE BAPTIZED?' AND HE GAVE ORDERS TO STOP THE CHARIOT. THEN BOTH PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH

4. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

- Baptism is a step of _____ and _____ to Christ Himself.

"THEREFORE GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT..." - MATTHEW 28:19

- Baptism allows you to take your _____ with Jesus.

Hebrews 13:12-13 "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

- Baptism is an opportunity for every Christian to _____ his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

THE COMMUNION CELEBRATION

1. WHAT IS COMMUNION?

"FOR I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD WHAT I ALSO PASSED ON TO YOU: THE LORD JESUS, ON THE NIGHT HE WAS BETRAYED, TOOK BREAD, AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BROKE IT AND SAID, 'THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH IS FOR YOU; DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.' IN THE SAME WAY, AFTER SUPPER HE TOOK THE CUP, SAYING, 'THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD; DO THIS, WHENEVER YOU DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.' FOR WHENEVER YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS CUP, YOU PROCLAIM THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES. " - I CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

- Communion is a _____,
- Communion is the sign of the _____,
- Communion is a _____.

2. WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNION?

- Communion is only for those who are already _____

3. HOW DO I PREPARE FOR COMMUNION?

- Self Examination

"WHOEVER EATS THE BREAD OR DRINKS THE CUP OF THE LORD IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER WILL BE GUILTY OF SINNING AGAINST THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD A MAN OUGHT TO EXAMINE HIMSELF BEFORE HE EATS OF THE BREAD AND DRINKS THE CUP. "

1 CORINTHIANS
11:27-28

- Confession of Sin

"IF WE CLAIM TO BE WITHOUT SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST AND WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND PURIFY US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. " - I JOHN 1:8-9

Growth

GROWTH

NUDGING *One Another Closer*

to Christ

ICEBREAKERS

As a child, what did you want to be when **you** grew up?

What one or two Christians have had significant impact on your spiritual growth? Explain.

INTRODUCTION

Most of us as Christians are aware that Christ calls us to be disciples. We may not be clear about what a disciple is or what discipleship means. In fact, we may not have ever had any other believer take us under their care and help us grow in Christ.

In spite of this possible deficiency there is hope. Christ is THE discipler. The Spirit is our Teacher. We need not stew over the lack of someone taking the time to help us figure out how to live the Christian life.

But it is also true that the NT clearly indicates there were discipleship relationships among the early believers. Christ had an inner circle of three close friends. He had a select 'team' of 12 called 'apostles' whom He ordained to be 'with Him'. The apostles seem to have hung out together. And Paul is seldom seen alone.

This is a brief study about the process of New Testament discipleship. It is not complete but it is a start. May it encourage us to be focused about the mission of the church and encourage us to 'nudge one another' closer to Christ.

DISCIPLESHIP

1. Read Matthew 28:19-20. In as clear a way as you know how state the mission of the church.

2. How would you define a disciple?

3. What was Jesus' view of discipleship from the following passages:

John 8:31-32

John 13:34-35

John 15:8

Luke 14:27-33

Based on these verses, how would you define a disciple?

Dawson Trotman: *"One man or woman 100 committed to Christ can do more than 100 men or women who are 90% committed."*

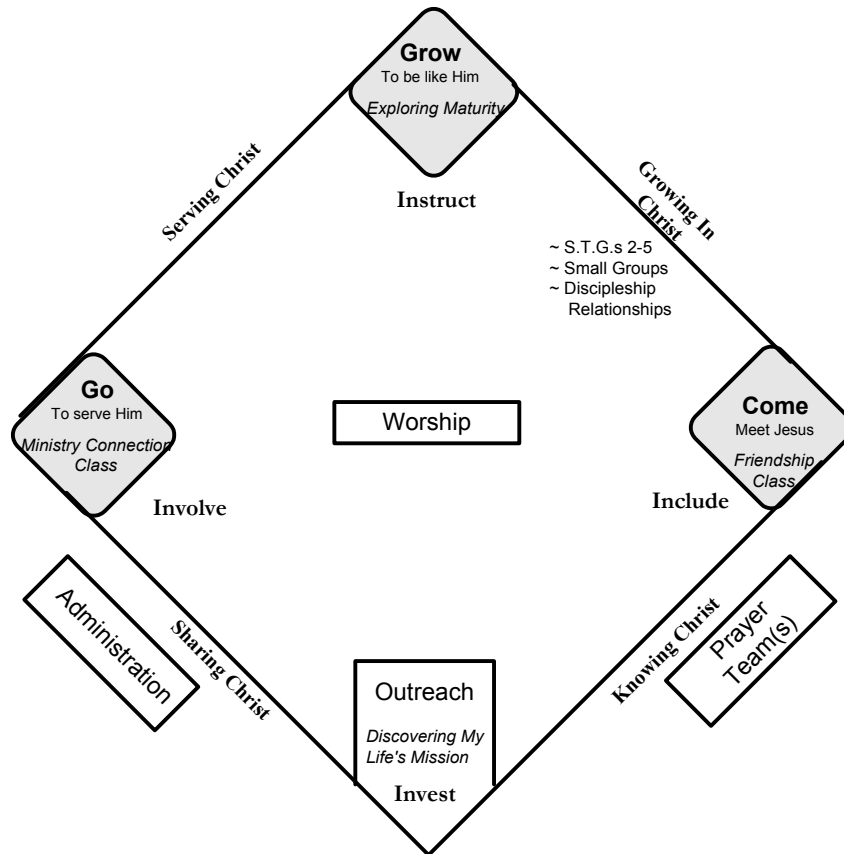
5. Study the sheet entitled, "Stages of Discipleship" looking up at least the key verses listed. Come ready to discuss your observations.

6. Read Acts 2:42-47. What were the practices and priorities of the early church? The early church was committed to:

7. Study the "Wheel" illustration. From the illustration of the wheel what observations can we make about spiritual growth? What part of the wheel are you strongest in? What part of the wheel are you weakest in?

Discipling Process - Purpose
(Ministry Structured Around the 5 Purposes of the Church)

We Build People



TITLES GIVEN TO
BELIEVERS

CHRISTIANS: 3 TIMES

ACTS 11:26;

16:28;

I PETER

4:16

PILGRIMS: 3
TIMES

HEIRS: 18
TIMES

FIRSTBORN: 1 TIME
(HEB. 12:23)

BELIEVER(S): 12
TIMES

ANTI TRIPM AD

DISCIPLES: 257 TIMES

THE ROOT MEANING IS
"LEARNER" IT IMPLIES

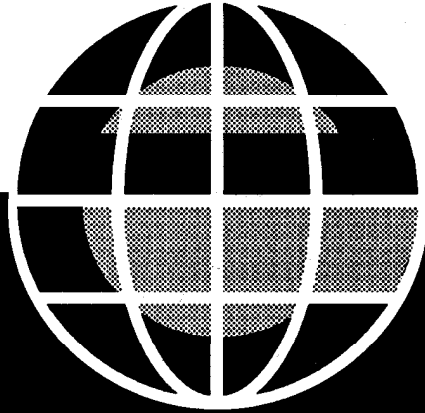
CURIOUS - CONVINCED -
GROWING - COMMITTED
DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT
SOMETHING WE DO TO
OTHER BELIEVERS BUT
WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST
AND IT REFERS TO A
LIFELONG PROCESS OF
LEARNING FROM OUR ONE
TEACHER, JESUS CHRIST
THROUGH THE WORD AND
SPIRIT OF GOD.

THE LEARNING REFERRED TO
IS NOT MERELY
KNOWLEDGE BUT
OBEDIENCE TO WANT WE
ARE SAVED KNOWLEDGE

Group

SECTION I

INTRODUCING



**THE
EVANGELICAL
FREE CHURCH
OF AMERICA**

THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA

The **Evangelical Free Church of America** (EFCA) is an association of 1200 autonomous churches united by a mutual commitment to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in obedience to the Word of God. We are committed to cooperating with one another in ministry and fellowship as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission Christ entrusted to His Church. The growing ministry of the EFCA currently extends to 20 other nations, encompassing nearly 1000 additional congregations.

The **term Evangelical** refers to our commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel and to the authority of the Scriptures as the only safe and sufficient guide to faith and practice.

The term **Free** refers to the autonomy of local churches, as well as to a congregational form of government. Evangelical Free Churches depend upon the active participation of lay people in its decisions and ministries.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EFCA

The Evangelical Free Church of America began in the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Its religious and philosophical roots are firmly planted on the foundational principles of two major historical events. The first was the 16th century Protestant Reformation which changed the religious climate all across Europe. The Church had strayed far from a biblically based foundation, and reform back to biblical roots was desperately needed. Three revolutionary principles of the Reformation laid the foundation for spiritual renewal and formed the basis for the "free church" movement during the next 250 years:

- *Sola Scriptura* ("only the Scriptures") The Scriptures, not the institutional church, are the primary authority by which humanity must live and against which truth and error must be judged.
- *Sola Gratia* ("only by grace") Salvation is by grace alone, the free and unmerited gift of God to a sinful human world.
- *Sola Fides* ("only by faith") The gift of salvation and the benefits of being in God's eternal family come through personal faith in Christ as Savior, not by any personal good works, the merits of a human mediator, religious ceremonies or institutional efforts.

The second major historical event was a mid-19th century grass-roots movement across Europe to break away from established state-controlled churches, which were in many cases simply arms of government. In the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, the Lutheran Church acted in such a manner. A number of issues emerged and brought an unsettledness among a growing number of Christians:

- *The dominance of the State over the Church.* The relationship between the State and the Church was unhealthy because the State had far more authority over the Church than did the Scriptures. In most places, the State had authority to dictate what the Church was to believe, how it was to worship, and how it was to be governed.

- *Deadness of the Church.* As a State Church, it was the Church of all citizens whether or not they were truly believers. The churches' beliefs and practices were not under the control of believers who sought to follow the Scriptures in everything they did. In many churches, the services and ceremonies had become hollow religious experiences with little personal spiritual commitment, involvement in ministries, or evangelistic missions outreach.
- *Mandatory and open communion.* Instead of emphasizing the need for a personal faith in Christ, the churches' emphasis was on attending communion services which was often required by law and granted to everyone regardless of their personal spiritual commitments.

A grass roots movement began to return churchgoers to a faith founded on the Scriptures and real in the heart. As people came to know Christ personally as Savior and Lord and studied the Bible, they formed some strong convictions regarding the foundational principles for local churches:

- *Church membership* of "believers only, but all believers." The church membership was to be composed only of individuals who profess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and must not exclude anyone except when this confession is lacking.
- *A scriptural basis* for theological belief and personal life-style. "Where stands it written?" was asked on questions of belief and practice.
- *Local church autonomy*, the right of self-government, free from the control of the State.
- *The ordinances* were for believers only. Baptism and communion were for those who confessed personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- *Active involvement* of lay people in the work of the church. The ministry of the church was for all believers, not just for the professionally trained pastors.
- *Missionary activity.* Other people needed to know the good news of the Gospel and missionaries needed to be sent to other parts of the world.

Believers affirming these principles began to develop informal and unofficial gatherings within the larger State Church. But as these new groups began to implement some of the principles, church authorities pressured them to abandon their ways or withdraw from the established Church. They chose to withdraw and began establishing new "Free Churches" on their own. Hence, the "free" church was born.

A few years after this movement began, immigrants from the Scandinavian countries started coming to the United States and established churches. In 1884, the Swedish group formally began in Boone, Iowa, and at the same time Norwegian-Danish groups began to worship and fellowship together in Boston, Massachusetts and Tacoma, Washington. Many of the early churches were also established in Minnesota and Illinois.

The two branches of the Free Church grew independently of one another for many years. Because each group still used its respective language and was strongly nationalistic, they rarely fellowshiped together. But in the 1940's, the two groups developed an increasing desire to merge. By this time, the two groups commonly shared five elements: their heritage, English-speaking services, doctrinal statements, church structure, and a desire for joint ministries. In 1946, the Free Church groups united when both conferences approved the merger of their schools and publications.

Finally, in June of 1950, near Minneapolis, Minnesota, the two associations completed their merger. With 275 churches uniting, the Evangelical Free Church of America was born. The national and international offices of the EFCA have been located in Minneapolis since that time.

Dr. E. A. Halleen, who led the Swedish group for 28 years, was elected president for one year. He was 76 years old. A statement in his inaugural address illustrates the spirit of that meeting, "I feel that I am the connecting link between yesteryear and today It is an honor to be a Norwegian--nearly as much as it is to be a Swede. By tomorrow we'll all be Americans."

One year later, Dr. Arnold T. Olson was elected president, eventually serving for a remarkable 26 years. During that time, the Free Church moved from being a small, ethnic denomination to one appealing broadly to all kinds of Americans and Canadians. The Free Church missionary force grew to 200, churches multiplied, and a new magazine, *The Evangelical Beacon*, replaced the old ethnic publications. Free Church Youth Fellowship (FCYF) groups around the country began to meet in national student conferences each summer. Trinity College and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School prospered, moving from Chicago to a sprawling campus in Deerfield, Illinois. In 1962, Trinity Junior College (now Trinity Western University) was founded in Langley, British Columbia.

By the time Dr. Thomas McDill was elected president in 1976, the Free Church had changed dramatically. During his tenure, the Free Church experienced even more rapid growth. The denomination also began moving aggressively toward urban and ethnic ministries within the United States. Each of the Free Church Departments established specific, aggressive long-range goals to guide their growth. Since that time the EFCA has grown considerably.

Year	Churches	Constituency	Districts	Pastors	Mission Fields	Missionaries
1950	275	22,000	7	435	4	82
1975	536	56,000	14	950	8	209
1990	1040	165,000	21	1688	15	450
1994	1192	214,000	22	1770	27	500

This growth continues under the leadership of our fourth president, Dr. Paul Cedar, who was elected to this position in June of 1990. In past years, he served as pastor of two Evangelical Free churches, as dean of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, as a visiting seminary professor, and most recently as the senior pastor of the Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena, California.

The EFCA is continuing to grow in influence as well as size. Because of its strong biblical foundation and its openness to cooperating with the broad evangelical world of churches and para-church organizations, the EFCA has an increasing influence and leadership role in the evangelical world.

In projecting growth of various denominations, *Christianity Today* included the EFCA among those denominations which should experience growth of 20 percent or more over the next decade (*What it Means to be Free*, p. 13,14). George Barna, an expert in church growth and dynamics, has stated, "The denominations that will make greatest headway in the 90's will not be the mainline churches, but those which are smaller and willing to take greater risks . . . groups such as . . . the Evangelical Free Church will grow most quickly." (*The Frog in the Kettle*, p.143, 144). By the grace of God and dependent upon the power of His Spirit, the EFCA will continue to grow, with the objective in mind of winning more people to Christ and discipling them in the faith.

So what is the Evangelical Free Church of America? Prior to the 1960's, the few who had even heard of it probably would have responded that it was just a small Scandinavian denomination with little to distinguish it and with minimal influence on what was happening on the larger church scene. Within the past 100 years, and especially in the past 30 years, the Evangelical Free Church has grown from a small ethnic-oriented fellowship of churches into one of the fastest growing small denominations in America. Its membership includes people from all walks of life, all ethnic groups and almost all denominational backgrounds. They are joined together with one common commitment--that Jesus Christ is Savior of the World, Head of the Church, and Lord of Life.

Additional information on the topics found in this section are:

1. A biographical sketch of the current EFCA president, Dr. Paul Cedar (Appendix, p. 59).
2. "A Lasting Legacy," a four-page article by former president of the EFCA, Dr. Thomas McDill, on the heritage and guiding principles of the EFCA (Appendix, p. 60-63).
3. *What it Means to be Free*, by Calvin B. Hansen. Minneapolis: Free Church Publications, 1990. This book gives a more in-depth overview of the history, distinctives and challenges of the EFCA.

Doctrinal Statement

1. We believe **the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments**, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life."

The OT and NT is inspired by God

2 Tim. 3:16; Romans 3:2; 2 Peter 1:19-21, 3:16; John 16:13; Matthew 23:35; 5:17)
without error in the original writings

Isaiah 40:8

Our final authority for faith and life ("where stands it written?")

John 10:34-35; Rom. 15:14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17; Ps 19:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13;

1 Peter 1:19-21

Isaiah 40:8

2. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

We believe in one God

Deuteronomy 6:4; Is 44:6; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Mark 12:29-30; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

Ephesians 4:6;

1 Timothy 1:17 2:5

"The Hebrew original here (Deut 6:4) is nothing short of a solemn declaration that Jehovah is a plurality in unity. The word translated 'our God' is elohenu en , which is the plural elohim (gods), with the first personal possessive plural suffix appended to it, causing it to become elohenu that is, 'our gods.' This then, is what the great publication of Israel says: 'Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our Gods, Jehovah is one.' But to make the matter clearer still, the Hebrew word translated as 'one' (echad) d is a word which, strictly taken, expresses 'one' in the collective sense. That is, it signifies, not an absolute unity, but a compound unity, such as is indicated in the expression 'one cluster of grapes.' The Hebrew word for 'one' in the sense of absolute unity is the word yacheed; and this word is never used to express the unity of the Godhead. " J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore the Book. Zondervan, pages 213-214.

We believe He is the Creator of all things

Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3, 6; Psalm 8; 19; 33:6,9; 136;

Psalm 139; 148:5; Ex 20:11; Isaiah 44:24; 45:11-12; Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31; Rom 1:18-20

We believe that God is perfect

Deut.32:4; Ps.19:7; Is.46:9; 55:8,9; Mt.5:48

and that He eternally exists in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Gen 1:1-2,26; Is 6:8; Gen 22:11,15-16; Is 48:16; 59:20; Ps 110

The Father is God: John 6:27; Ephesians 4:6

Jesus Christ is God: Hebrews 1:8; John 8:58; Mk 14:61-64; John 1:1-3; 20:28; Col 2:9; 1 John 5:20

The Holy Spirit is God: Acts 5:3-4; Matt 28:19

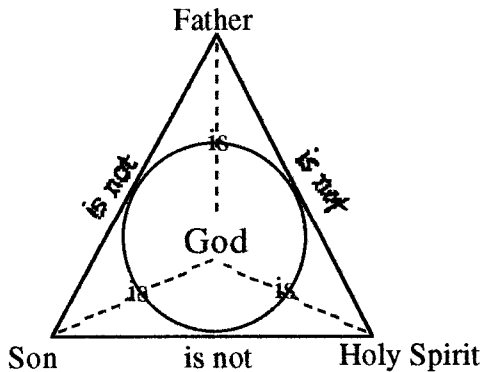
The Three Persons are associated equally and as one:

Matt 28:19-20; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 2:18,22; 3:14-17; 4:4-6

The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinguished from each other:

The Father and Son are distinct: Jn 5:32; 1:14; 3:16; 10:36; Gal 4:4; Mt 27:46

The Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son: Jn 14:8-11,16-17,23-26; 15:26; Gal 4:6



The word “trinity” or “tri-unity” is not found in the Bible. It is a word coined to express the Bible’s teaching concerning the unique existence of one God in three Persons. (Neither are the words, “Bible” and “theology”.) The absence of the word “trinity” does not disprove the truth of it. The Bible simply teaches that God is one and that in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal, coequal, separate persons who have the same qualities (attributes) but are distinct persons.

The Bible does not teach 3 stages of one God, not 3 successive steps in God’s existence, not tri-theism, not 3 aspects of one God. The Bible teaches 3 in 1 and 1 in 3 = Tri - Unity. One God in 3 co-equal, co-existent, one nature yet 3 different persons. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit function simultaneously and separately yet in full agreement and are equally God in character.

Other References:

Phil 2:11; Is 45:23; 1 Cor 8:4-8; 12:3-6; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev.17:14; 19:16

Inadequate Views of God

We reject the following views of God as inadequate:

1. Atheism, the belief that God does not exist.
2. Agnosticism, the belief that if God does exist, we can know nothing about Him.
3. Pantheism, the belief that God is everything there is, or, to say it another way, that the universe is the extension of His essence.
4. Polytheism, the belief that many gods exist, a belief which almost inevitably expresses itself in hopelessly inaccurate symbols of god (idols, images, animals and even insects).

Inadequate or Errant Views of the Plurality of Persons in God

On the basis of Scripture, therefore, we reject the following as inadequate and/or errant views of God.

1. Tritheism, belief in three Gods, a charge often laid against Christians by Muslims and Jews.
2. Sabellianism or modalism, the belief which holds a trinity of revelation, but not of nature. In this view, god is seen as the Creator and Lawgiver and thus Father; as Son, He is the same Person incarnate who fulfills the office of Redeemer; and as Holy Spirit, He is the same Person at work in the regeneration and sanctification of believers. This belief views the Trinity as modal (a form of expression) rather than ontological (a form of existence). It exists today in the teachings of “Jesus Only” cults.

3. Attributism, to coin a word, the belief that Trinity refers to God's attributes rather than His essence or nature. This error is found in the writings of Freemasonry, e.g.:
 "To every Mason, there is a GOD; ONE, Supreme, Infinite in Goodness, Wisdom, Foresight, Justice, and Benevolence; Creator, Disposer, and Preserver of all things..." To every Mason, WISDOM or INTELLIGENCE, FORCE or STRENGTH, and HARMONY, or FITNESS and BEAUTY, are the Trinity of the attributes of God. With the subtleties of Philosophy concerning them Masonry does not meddle, nor decide as to the reality of the supposed Existences which are their Personification, or a Reality of the gravest import and significance." Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma of Freemasonry
4. Arianism, the belief in both God and god; that is, that the Supreme God exists (e.g., Yahweh), but He has created a lesser being (the Word or Jesus Christ) to act as His Agent who may also be called god or a god. This error is being spread today by the Jehovah's Witnesses and Freemasons.
5. Unitarianism, the belief that God is absolutely one, that there is no trinity of persons in the divine essence, but only the solitary One. This view is held by such groups as the Unitarian Universalist Church, Isalm, and Judaism.
6. Polytheism, the view that many gods can and do exist, a view held by Mormons, Hindus, etc.

3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary

Isaiah 7:14 with Matt 1:18-25

Isaiah 9:6-7 with Luke 1:30-33

Isaiah 40:3-5 w/ Luke 3:2-6

John 1:1-3, 14

Exodus 3:13-15 with John 8:58

John 16:27-28 and 17:1-5, 11, 24

Isaiah 6:1-10 w/ John 12:37-41

Deut 32:33-4 a/ I Cor 10:3-4

1 Peter 1:18-19 w/ Acts 20:28

John 20:28; 1 John 5:20

Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Colossians 2:9

Phil 2:5-11; Matt. 1:18-25

Life-giver, John 5:21; sinless-1 Peter 2:22; Heb 4:15; forgives sin: Mk 2:5-7; Luke 5:20; He is Judge: John 5:22,27; raises the dead, John 5:28-30

He is the object of worship: Mt 2:2; 8:2; 14:33; 28:9,17; John 9:38; 20:28; Hebrews 1:6; Rev 5:13-14

He is the object of prayer: John 14:14; Mt 11:28; Acts 7:59; 1 Cor 1:12; 12:5

He was true man: Gal 4:4; hungered, Mt 4:2; thirsted: John 19:28; tired: John 4:6; died: John 19:30

John 1:14; Phil 2:5-11

He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead ascended into heaven where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High He is our High Priest and Advocate Isaiah 53; Ps 22:1,7-8,16-18; Mk.10:45; 1 Peter 2:24-25; 1 Cor.15:3 Acts 2:24; 1 Cor.15:4-8; John 20:19-31 Acts 1:9-11 Luke 22:69; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Eph.1:20; Heb.1:3 Heb.2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 7:3; 1 John 2:1 Colossians 1:19-20 Revelation 1:5, 17-18

Inadequate or Errant Views of the Person of Jesus Christ

1. Ebionitism and Socinianism, the belief that denies the reality of Christ's divine nature, regarding Him as a mere man, whether supernaturally or naturally conceived. This view may concede that certain moral features of God were manifested in an unrivaled way in the life of Jesus, but it rejects His deity as a violation of monotheism. This view is held by theological liberals, "Moonies", etc.
2. Gnosticism, the belief that denies the reality of Christ's human body or denies the material nature of His body (e.g., the Docetae), or that holds that Jesus and Christ were distinct (e.g. the Cerinthians}. The latter held that Jesus was an ordinary man upon whom the Christ (a spirit or power) descended at His baptism and departed prior to His crucifixion. This view or similar ones are held today by such groups as the Bahai Faith and various New Age philosophies.
3. Arianism, the belief that both God and god exist; i.e., that the supreme and only God (e.g. Jehovah) has created a lesser being to act as His agent who may also be called god (e.g., Jesus). We meet this view today in the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Freemasonry.
4. Apollinarianism, the belief that denies the integrity of the human nature of Christ by saying that He had a true body (soma) and animal soul (psuche) but not a rational spirit, or mind (pneuma or nous). It taught that in Jesus the eternal Son or Logos took the place of the human intelligence.
5. Nestorianism, a view which was held to deny the real union of the divine and human natures in Christ, and affirmed or implied a twofold personality in Him. This view saw the union of the divine and the human natures in Christ as similar to the indwelling of the Spirit, with the real difference between Christ and other God-indwelt men being seen in the fullness of His presence and the absolute control that the divine in Christ exercised over the human. We sense this view from time to time in the writings of theological liberals.
6. Eutychianism, the view that holds everything about Christ is divine, even His body, so that there are not two natures in Christ but one. This view denies Christ's humanity by deifying it to the point where it could not be identified with ours. Those who think the Lord Jesus Christ could never be truly tempted because He is God approach this viewpoint.

7. Mysticism, the belief found in many eastern religions that Jesus is merely one in a series of incarnations or avatars of God (e.g., the god Vishnu in Hinduism), or, in a slightly different form, that He is one of a series of "Manifestations of God", such as Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Muhammad, etc., who were not God incarnate, but bodies inhabited by God or "the Christ spirit". This common oriental belief that there is one eternal "Christ spirit" that merely inhabits a new body in each age is a teaching common to the Bahai Faith and New Age or "Metaphysical" groups.

4. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.

Gen 1:1-2; 6:3; 1 Sam 16:13-14; 2 Chron 24:20; Is 63:10-14; Eze 3:24 (There are at least 82 specific references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament) Lk 1:15; 3:21-22 Jn 16:14 Jn. 1 6:7-11 Jn 3:3,6-8; Titus 3:5 Jn.14:17; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor.12:13 Jn 16:13 Jn.14:26; 1 John 2:27 Acts 1:8; Romans 8:1-17; Gal. 5:16-25 Some names of God's Spirit: Acts 2:17; Romans 8:2; 2 Cor 3:3; 3:17-18 1 Cor 6:1 1; Lk 4:18; Acts 16:7; Rom 8:9; Phil 1:19; Gal 4:6

Inadequate or Erroneous Views of the Holy Spirit

1. Modalism, the belief that the Holy Spirit is merely the one that is God's form of expression in this age rather than His eternal form of existence as the third Person of the Trinity.
2. "Attributism" the belief that terms referring to the Spirit of God are merely personifications of some attribute of God or of some facet of "truth", as does Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science.

5. We believe that man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) but fell into sin (Gen.3) and is therefore lost (Matt.18:11; Lk.15:1-4; 19:10) and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained {John 1:12-13}."

6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe (Jn.3:14-18; Romans 3:21-26) , and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God (John 1:12-13).

Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

Romans 6:23

1 Cor 15:1-5; 2 Car 5:21 1

Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:24 Rev

3:20

_____ takes place at the point of faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31
 _____ is given at the point of faith in Christ. John 3:36
 We become _____ at the point of faith. Gal 3:26
 We pass from _____ to _____ life at the point of
 faith. Jn 5:24
 We are _____ (declared right with God) at the point of faith. Rom 3:28; 5:1
 We are given the _____ of Christ at the point of faith. Rom 4:5; Phil 3:8-9
 We are _____ at the point of faith in Jesus. Luke 7:48-50; Acts 10:43

At least 150 in the NT say that personal faith in Jesus Christ alone is the only requirement to be forgiven:

Acts 10:43; 13:38-39; 48; 16:30-34; 4:4; 4:32; 5:14;
 Jn 1:12; 3:14-16,18,36; 5:24; 6:29,40,47; 7:38; 11:25f; 12:36, 44, 46; 20:30,31
 Romans 3:23f; 4:2-5; 5:1; 10:11,13; etc.

Inadequate Views of Salvation

1. Any teaching that saving faith is simply belief in a creed, the church, "the truth", etc rather than a specific, personal trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
2. Any belief that sees saving faith as mere agreement with or acknowledgement of the facts of the gospel, without an accompanying personal commitment to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, absolutely and finally.
3. Any view which holds there is saving value in faith itself, rather than in its solitary, saving object --Jesus Christ. It is not faith in "faith" that saves, but "faith in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:26). The error of some existential theology is attributing value to faith when believing has no value apart from what or who is believed or trusted.
4. Any view that sees salvation as a reward for or result of human effort or existence rather than the free gift of God given through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the error of legalism.
5. Any belief that something more than sincere, unreserved, whole-hearted trust in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation.
6. Any view that the believer's salvation is maintained by his faithful obedience rather than the power of God operating on his/her behalf.
Romans 5:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3-9; Romans 8:28-30; John 10:28-29
7. Any belief there is salvation through another way other than through faith in Jesus Christ.
Acts 4:12; John 14:6
8. Any view that sees a church, religious or political system as the source and dispenser of salvation, rather than Christ alone.
9. Any belief than all men will eventually be saved, for Scripture clearly teaches otherwise. (Jn 3:36; 5:24-30; Mt 7:13-14,21-23; 25:31-46). This is the error of universalism commonly held by neo-orthodox theologians and many profession Christians.
10. Any teaching that stops short of the salvation of the whole person, including the redemption of the body. Romans 8:22-24

7. We believe that water baptism (Matt.28:19-20; Acts 16:31-33; Romans 6:1-b) and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during the present age (Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor.11:23-34). They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation (Eph 2:8-9)."

Personal faith always preceded baptism: Acts 8:12; 16:14-15; 16:30-34; etc.

Every Christian should be baptized: Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:47-48; Romans 6:3-4

Water baptism is not part of the Gospel and has no saving power:

Compare 1 Cor 1:17 with Romans 1:16

Definition of an ordinance: Christ commanded it; the early church practiced it; the NT letters explain it.

8. We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the Head." (1 Cor.12:12-31; Colossians 1:18; 2:19; Eph.1:22-23; 2:13-22; 4:15-16; 5:23-24).

9. We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church:'

Romans 1:7; Col 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1

Romans 10:9-10

1 Peter 2:9-10

John 3:1-8

1 John 2:19-20 - kind of the negative side of this positive statement)

10. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs."

Acts 13:1-3; 15:1-29

Eph 1:22-23; 5:22-33

Col 1:15-20

1 Peter 5:1-4

Acts 6:1-6

Acts 13 : 1 -3

11. We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer."

The personal, premillennial and imminent (could be at any moment) coming of the Lord is of great value in the Christian life. Some folks in the past have been into prophecy as a fascination. Twenty % of the Scriptures is prophecy. And it was given to encourage and motivate believers. The teaching of our "Blessed Hope" exalts Christ (Rev.19:10); it was studied by godly men and women (Dan.9:2; Lk.2:25-32, 36-38; 1 Peter 1:10-12). It stimulates discipleship, 2 Peter 3:11,18; it gives us hope, Romans 5:2; 1 Cor.13:9-13; it gives us comfort, John 14:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; it produces endurance, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 1 Cor.15:58; it gives us assurance, Hebrews 6:10-11; and it brings joy, Romans 12:12.

There are 1200 references in the Old Testament to the second coming of Jesus Christ and many in the New Testament. Is 26:21; 29:6; 62:11-12; 66:15-16
 Daniel 7:13-14
 Zech 2:10-13; 8:3; 14:2-9
 Malachi 3:1-5
 Matt 24:27-44; 26:63-64
 Mark 13:32-37
 1 Corinthians 1:7
 Phil 3:20-21; Col 3:4
 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-17; 5:23
 2 Thessalonians 2:1,8
 2 Tim 4:1
 Titus 2:13
 Hebrews 9:24-28
 1 Peter 1:13; 4:13
 Revelation 1:7; 22:12
 John 14:1-3
 Acts 1:6-11
 1 Corinthians 15:22-28
 Revelation 19:11-20:10

12. We believe in **the bodily resurrection of the dead** (John 5:28-29; Dan 12:2); of **the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord** (John 14:i-6; 1 Cor.15:51-58; 2 Cor.5:1-13; 1 John 2:28-3:3), of **the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.** (Luke 16:19-31; John 3:18,36; Matt. 25:31-46; Romans 1:18; 2 Samuel 23:7; Rev.20:11-15; Matt.5:27-30; 10:28; 13:50; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 12:1-5; Jude 7).

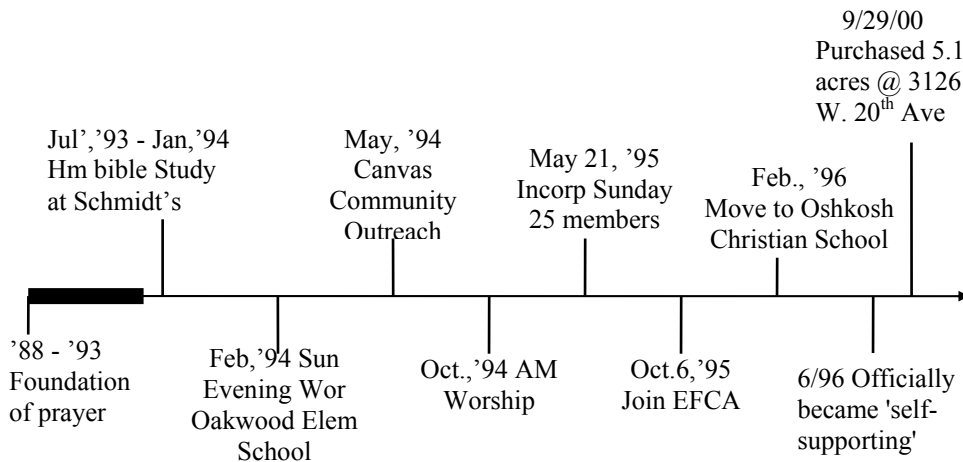
Inadequate Views of the Afterlife

1. There is no afterlife.
2. That the resurrection body is spiritual and does not have physical characteristics.
3. Reincarnation or the idea of multiple births and deaths. The concept of someone being recycled in a different form or body until he reaches a purified or divine state is taken from pagan philosophies of religion. It is the belief that one can save oneself through working out his own salvation (or Karma) through the process of living many lives and suffering many things until one reaches Nirvana or oneness with deity (which usually means becoming one with the impersonal force that fills and forms the universe, usually by such techniques as yoga, meditation, etc.). It is never found in the Bible, for the future is not one of being born again and again and again, ad infinitum, but one of birth, and possibly new birth in a spiritual sense, then death and resurrection to either life or judgment (Hebrews 9:27). And salvation is never a process by which man purifies himself but always and only the experience of justification by grace through faith, apart from any works at all. Eph. 2:8-9
4. The concept of purger, an intermediate place between earth and heaven where imperfect sinners may be finally perfected and fitted for heaven through temporary suffering for their sins. This is completely foreign to the Bible. Like the idea of reincarnation it leads people to believe there is a second chance or numerous second chances to become right with God in an afterlife. This view is not only wrong but dangerous. It could encourage a person to put off getting right with God now on the assumption that he/she can do this later.

HISTORY

Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church was born out of spiritual need and a foundation of prayer. Many people were involved: Rev. Art Volkmann, and the Trinity Free Church congregation in Ripon, saw the need for an Evangelical Free Church in Oshkosh. For years they committed this need to the Lord. In the summer of 1993 Pastor Ed Riddick and his wife, moved to the Oshkosh area as pioneer missionaries.

The church planting efforts began, with the support of friends. In his sermon, “A Mind-Expanding Faith” John Ortberg reflects on the incident of Peter walking on water. He says, “All of us are ‘would-be water walkers.’ ” The boat was safe, secure and comfortable. The water high, the waves rough, the wind strong. Yet Peter ventured out. He adds that there is something, Someone, inside us that tells us to leave the routine of comfortable existence and abandon ourselves in this adventure of following Christ. This vision has captured our attention. If it captures yours, be assured we would love to have you. Below is our brief “life-map.”



Gifts

“Every Christian is called into ministry. When they serve in areas of their calling, passion and giftedness they serve enthusiastically, competently and are free to be themselves. Our aim is to challenge believers to respond obediently to God’s calling and to help them discover their unique passion, gift(s) and temperament mix and to serve Christ accordingly.

MINISTRY CONNECTION

THROUGH LOVE, SERVE ONE ANOTHER (Galatians 5:13)

TEACHING

Worship

Servanthood - Obedience - Stewardship

Phase I

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

HEART

ABILITIES

PERSONALITY

EXPERIENCE

MATURITY

AVAILABILITY

Phase II

CONSULTATION

Phase III

SERVICE

"Prepare plans by consultation" Prov 20:18

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me because He considered me faithful, putting me into service."

1 Tim 1:12

**MAKING YOUR UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO GOD'S KINGDOM
IN A MEANINGFUL PLACE OF SERVICE**

TALENTS - SKILLS - SPECIAL ABILITIES

The most interesting volunteer work I ever had was _____
because _____.

Please go through each area below, circling talents or skills in which you have ability (confidence and competence) or interest. Indicate ability with an "a" and interest with an "i".

<p><u>Mechanical</u> Copier Repair Auto Mechanic Diesel Mechanic Sm Engine Repair Machinist Other: _____</p> <p><u>Construction</u> General Contractor Architect Carpenter: General Carpenter: Cabinet Electrician Plumbing Heating Air Conditioning Painting Papering Masonry Roofer Telephones Concrete Carpet Installer Tile Installer Interior Design Draftsman Other: _____</p> <p><u>Working With</u> Financially needy Handicapped Hearing Impaired Incarcerated Learning Disabilities Nursing Homes Hospital Visitation Meals on Wheels Other: _____</p>	<p><u>Professional Serv</u> Mental Health Social Work Financial Dental / Medical Legal Accounting / Taxes Nursing Landscaping Carpet Cleaning Window washing Engineer Lifeguard Counseling Career Counseling Financial Counseling Day Care Director Law Enforcement Personnel Manager Public Relations Advertising Radio / Television Computer Programmer Paramedic/EMT Systems Analyst Journalist/Writer Newsletter editor Newsletter writer Other: _____</p> <p><u>Art</u> Layout Photography Graphics Multi-media Crafts Artist Banners Decorating Bulletin board design Other: _____</p>	<p><u>Musical</u> Soloist Small Singing Gp Choir Choir Dir -Child/Adult Instrument: Composer/Arranger Piano Tuner Other: _____</p> <p><u>Theatrical</u> Drama Poetry Dance Mime Puppets Clowning Audio Production Sound/Mixing Lighting Set Design/Constructi Stage Hand Script Writer Other: _____</p> <p><u>Teaching/Assisting</u> Nursery / Preschool Elementary Junior High Senior High Camping Coordinator Camp Counselor Camp/Day Camp Dir Single Adults Adults Couples Men's groups Women's groups Tutoring / ESL Reader / Researcher Aerobics Other: _____</p>	<p><u>General Help</u> Sunday AM set-up Nursery Babysitting Cooking / Catering Event planner/coordin Gardening Greeting Newcomers Transportation Snow Removal Wedding Coordinator Bookstore Tape Duplication Plant care (indoor) Sports Official Sports Coach Other: _____</p> <p><u>Office Skills</u> Word Processing Receptionist Office Manager Administrative Assis Filing Lending Library: Books, Audio, Video Transcription Other: _____</p> <p><u>Pastoral Care and Missions</u> Help with visitation Pastoral Care Assis. Serve Communion Collect Offering/Count Missionary Evangelism Other: _____</p>
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EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES: Degrees, favorite subjects...

ABILITIES:

1. My current vocation is:
2. Other jobs or skills I have experience in:
3. I have taught class or a seminar in:
4. I feel my most valuable personal asset is:

MY MINISTRY EXPERIENCE: Where I have served in the past (if applicable);

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

HEART:

1. What I have a heart for, or what motivates me most...
~ I loved to

~ I love to
2. Who I love to work with most, and the age and type of people:
3. Church issues, ministries, or possible needs that excite or concern me most:
4. If I know I couldn't fail and money were no object this is what I would attempt to do for God and His Kingdom with my life:
5. This is the kind of problem or trial I could relate to and encourage another person:

Good Stewardship

Oakbrook's Membership Requirements

Every genuine believer in Jesus Christ no matter what church they attend is a member of God's "forever" family. In the New Testament Christ's family is called "the body of Christ". This is *positional membership* in the Family of God.

Becoming a member of a local church is all about being a *participating member* of a local fellowship. It is about who is tangibly committed to this specific local church. It is one way to discover who are the core participants on whom we can depend for future growth.

At Oakbrook we view membership as a discipleship tool. It is not so much a class to be done with or about joining but a tool to encourage and applaud personal spiritual growth. It is part of the process of helping each other become Christ's fully devoted followers.

Requirements:

1. Attend the Friendship Class (orientation class).
2. Be in basic personal agreement with Oakbrook's statement of faith and distinctives and with its stated mission, vision and values.
3. Give some evidence of "owning" the values of discipleship reflected in the "5 G's".
 - a. **Grace:** Have accepted God's free gift of salvation by grace through personal faith in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness.
 - b. **Growth:** Have some evidence of interest in personal spiritual growth in your relationship with Christ. (Attend worship service regularly, etc.)
 - c. **Group:** Have some interest in "doing Christianity together" in community where support, encouragement and accountability are experienced. We realize there are mitigating circumstances of work schedules, time of year, time of life, etc. But all things considered you are or would like to be an active part of some type of small group for encouragement, study, prayer and accountability.
 - d. **Gifts:** You have an interest in serving Christ in some way within the church family.
 - e. **Good Stewardship:** You are giving your time, talents and treasure to serve Christ.

Spirituality is about the process of learning to walk with Jesus Christ in daily life. No one is perfect in this process. At Oakbrook we believe the "5 G's" express the values disciples pursue.

4. Give testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ. This can be given in writing or verbally. It can be given in various settings: interview with pastor / elders, in small group, etc.

Procedure for Becoming a Member:

1. Investigation
 - a. Attend the Friendship Class
 - b. Read Oakbrook's 'Foundation Documents': Statement of Faith and Distinctives; its mission, vision and values and the church constitution and bylaws.
2. Confirmation: fill out a brief personal information sheet.
3. Affirmation: Meet with a pastor, elders or small group leader to share your faith story and ask any questions you like.
4. Celebration: Be officially welcomed into membership during a worship service.

Oakbrook Membership Information Form

Name _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____ Work Phone _____

Birthday _____ Anniversary _____ email address _____

Children's names and birthday: _____ Date started attending Oakbrook: _____

Occupation: _____ Firm: _____

Interests / hobbies: _____

Use the space below to share briefly how you came to personal faith in Jesus Christ. (Use the back if you need more space.) _____

Have you been baptized? Yes ___ No ___ Date? _____ If not, would you like to be? _____

Are you presently a member of a church in good standing? Yes ___ No ___

Name of church: _____

Are there any areas of 'unfinished business' in your relationship with your previous church home that are unresolved? _____

I am enthusiastically committed to...

GRACE: "I confess my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Leader..."

GROWTH: "I will endeavor to grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ making use of the opportunities for spiritual growth available at Oakbrook as I can. By the power of the Holy Spirit I will endeavor to order my life according to the Scriptures. I expect and welcome in my life the ministry of my church family and its leaders as they seek to encourage, teach, counsel and correct me in love in the Lord..."

GROUP: "I am in agreement with Oakbrook's statement of faith and its mission, vision and values. I am committed to the unity of the church family in the bond of peace..."

GIFTS: "Seeking to be a servant and use my gifts, passions and calling from Christ, I will earnestly seek to find my place of service in and through this fellowship as it pleases Christ."

GOOD STEWARDSHIP: "I purpose in my heart to use my time, talent and treasure to serve Christ in this church family and community to reach the world for Christ."

Signed: _____ Date: _____