

Church Planting Ecclesiology<sup>1</sup>  
**How do we Incorporate New People?**

The dominant topic for this term is the issue of ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the church. We want to come at that from several directions.

1. Exegetically
2. Doctrinally
3. Practically

What is the problem that we're looking to solve or the issue we're looking to address?

**Discuss:** What are we after? What does the New Testament encourage every believer to do in a church family? Where would we go in the scriptures to establish that?

**Discussion:** what do you think your church plant needs to do to take people from visitor to regular

What are some of the discrete stages in that journey?  
How might we encourage them to move on to the next stage?

<b>Who are they?</b>	<b>What are they doing?</b>	<b>What do they need to progress</b>
Visitor	They're just looking to see whether you could be their church family	
Returner	They've come back to confirm whether you could be their church family	
Newcomer	They've taken the decision to make you their church family	
Regular	They treat everyone else like a part of their church family	

**Discuss:** What are the things that we might implement to help people progress at each stage?

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Perkins LCPA, CPT Material 2022

	What do they need?	How might we provide it?
From visitor to returner	A reason to come back	
From returner to newcomer	A reason to stay	
From newcomer to regular	A reason to contribute	

### The Membership Process

1. The membership documents
2. The membership class
3. The membership interview
4. The membership announcement

#### 1. The Membership Documents

There are two things that stand out

1. The Doctrinal Basis of Faith: this is a summary of what we believe as a church
2. The Membership Covenant: this is a summary of how we behave as a church

#### The Doctrinal Basis of Faith

Four reasons to have a doctrinal basis of faith

1. It helps visitors to your church know what kind of church you are and what you believe.
2. It helps teachers in your church know what they should and should not teach.
3. It helps elders of your church know what to protect and what to challenge.
4. It helps members at your church know which truth binds us together with a shared understanding about what matters.

Dundonald Church  
The Statement of Faith

This reformed evangelical Statement of Faith summarises the core convictions of our church.

In joyful gratitude to the Lord God for our salvation in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we affirm wholeheartedly the following Statement of Faith as consistent with Scripture and central to our teaching, preaching, pastoring, church planting, ministries of care, and global evangelism:

God – the Holy Trinity

There is only one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is immortal, eternal, and perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning. He is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge, sovereign in the election, salvation and preservation of his people in Christ. God is sovereign over all things, both good and evil; though, he is not the author of evil, nor does he delight in it.

The Bible

God has revealed himself and his promises in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is, in its entirety, the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible is clear to all who seek God's will and are willing to live by it, though the human mind is finite and fallen in its reading of it. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

The Human Race

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. This dignity is not annulled by gender role distinction or male headship in marriage and in church leadership. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. Adam and Eve, our first parents, rebelled against God and plunged themselves and their offspring into ruin. Because of Adam's sin, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be reborn, justified, forgiven, reconciled to God in Christ in order to know and please him.

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood and reconciling to God all those who believe. He rose bodily from the dead and so was vindicated by his Father. He broke the power of death and defeated Satan, and brought everlasting life to all his people. In his resurrection body he ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father. Salvation is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. From all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from all peoples, and to this end foreknew them, predestined them and chose them. This plan of salvation has been accomplished in history by the Lord Jesus Christ's once and for all penal substitutionary death, resurrection and ascension. This salvation now is offered freely and openly to all through the gospel. God in his love sovereignly applies this accomplished salvation to the elect through union with his Son. In Christ he effectually calls, regenerates and grants his elect repentance and faith. The elect are justified through

faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone. In Christ, God mercifully imputes to believers the righteousness of his Son, so that they are declared righteous in his sight and pardoned of all sin. In Christ they are adopted into the family of God, progressively sanctified by the Holy Spirit for holiness and are preserved for the coming Kingdom and New Creation.

#### The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and is fully God. He has been sent by the Father and the Son. In his work He glorifies the Son and applies the work of salvation to God's people through union with the Son. He regenerates and imparts spiritual life to spiritually dead sinners, so that they are convicted of sin and repent and believe. The Spirit inspired all Scripture and speaks in Scripture today. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and, while believers still battle personal and corporate sin, the Spirit progressively produces in believers increasing likeness to Christ. He gives gifts to build up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

#### The Church

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are central to the saving plan of God, and are led by godly, accountable elders. They are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, and the administering of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are to engage in pastoral care and discipline, mutual love and encouragement, to call all people to repentance and faith in the gospel of Christ, and to equip believers for world mission, mercy, and justice. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

#### The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will personally and bodily return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. Unbelievers will be sent to eternal conscious punishment where they are separated from the benevolent presence of God in Hell. Those who live by faith in Christ will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God in the promised New Creation. God will make all things new and will be glorified in all things forever.

### The Church Covenant

From <https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/about-us/what-we-believe/church-covenant/>

#### Capitol Hill Baptist Covenant

- Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.
- We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.
- We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.
- We will endeavour to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

- We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavour with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.
- We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.
- We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
- We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.
- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

## 2. The Membership Class

At Capitol Hill Baptist, this involves six one-hour sessions on a Friday night/Saturday morning format.

1. What is our Statement of Faith? What will we believe?
2. What is our Church Covenant? How will we live?
3. Why Join a Church? Why is church membership important and what does it entail?
4. What is the History of the Church? How are we connected to the steam of Christianity that has come before us?
5. Who Put the Southern in Southern Baptist? What are our denominational structures and distinctives?
6. Nuts and Bolts? What is the structure and leadership of our local church?

## 3. The Membership Interview

## 4. The Membership Announcement

### The Membership Class Revisited

I decided that I wanted people to join us to be familiar with the following issues or at least be able to know the answer to the following questions.

1. Our convictions: what do we believe?
2. Our culture: how do we do things?
3. Our context: here has God placed us?
4. Our church: how are we organised?
5. Our contribution: how can we get involved?

Reduced to

1. Our convictions: understanding what we believe, why we believe it and why it matters
2. Our context: understanding the situation in which God has placed us, why we're here and where we're going
3. Our church: understanding who we are, what we do and how we operate

Weeks	Outline	Detail
Our Convictions	Understanding what we believe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain what the Bible is and how to understand and interpret the Bible in terms of its authority and sufficiency</li> <li>2. Explore the Statement of Faith in detail allowing time for questions and some debate</li> <li>3. Encourage people to understand the difference between essential and peripheral doctrines</li> </ol>
	Understanding why we believe it	
	Understanding why it matters	
Our Context	Understanding where God has placed us	<p>Describe your mission field</p> <p>Geographically: where is it in relation to everywhere else</p> <p>Historically: where has it come from and what's shaped it?</p> <p>Demographically: who's here and what are they like?</p> <p>Ideologically: what do people believe?</p>
	Understanding why God has placed us there	
	Understanding where God is taking us	
Our Church	Understanding who we are	<p>We're sinners, we're saved and we're servants and we're his body, his building and his bride</p> <p>We look to turn TDUs into FDDs through engaging our context, evangelism the open minded, establishing the believers and equipping the servant hearted</p> <p>Pitch Up, Plug In &amp; Play your Part!</p>
	Understanding what we do	
	Understanding how we operate	

### Conclusion

What are you going to provide to help people contribute to the work of the gospel in your church plant?