



Membership Manual

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it.”
(1 Corinthians 12:27)

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
(1 Peter 2:4-5)

1. Introduction

This little booklet aims to give you all the basic information you need in order to consider membership of Cross Culture Church. For this reason, we want to start by giving you a brief summary of our vision and values.

Vision

*To be a **Cross Centred, Culture Engaging, Church Community** for the great city of Johannesburg with a local presence in the North-Western Suburbs.*

Values

***Cross Centred**, because the cross is a symbol of what God the Father has done for us through his Son, Jesus Christ's death and resurrection: He has reconciled us to Himself (Romans 5:10). The cross is also a symbol of what the Father calls us to by the power of the Holy Spirit: the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). This require that we take up our cross of sharing and embodying the message of the cross of Jesus (Mark 8:34-38). We believe that this Good News, the GOSPEL preached, proclaimed and practiced, is the dynamite the Holy Spirit uses to blast new life into spiritually dead hearts (1 Thessalonians 1:5).*

Culture Engaging

*Being Cross Centred, compels us to be **Culture Engaging**. We are called to take this message of reconciliation to everyone, young and old, rich and poor, making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). This asks of us to be in this world but not from this world; separate from the culture of this age, yet present to God's work in culture (John 17:14-15). We believe that we are therefore called to be accessible to the people in our city, and at the same time counter cultural. People should be able to relate to us and yet find us to be different in significant ways (1 Peter 3:13-17). Put simply we believe that following and obeying Jesus should make us very strange to the average person and yet, not weird.*

Church Community

*We keep speaking about "US" because we believe Jesus, through his Spirit and Word, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a **community** chosen for eternal life and united in true faith, to worship God as his **Church**. As much as we love our country we are not naïve about the idea of the "rainbow nation" and we are not blind to the fact that we live in times of great cultural and racial division. We believe the Gospel of reconciliation to be the only real solution (Ephesians 2:14). As much as this Gospel needs to be preached, it needs to be embodied in communities where people love and serve each other, and worship together across man made barriers. Jesus' promise is clear: By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:35)." Jesus' famous prayer to the Fa-*

ther is our conviction: "I ask that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have send me (John 17:20-21).

2. Why become a church member?

The Bible consistently teaches that being in a relationship with God is personal but not an individual matter. Being reconciled to God is also about reconciliation with fellow believers and therefore becoming part of God's people. From God's calling of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) onwards God reveals his plan to call a people who will be a community to reflect his character and be his witnesses to the world (1 Peter 2:9-10).

As a Christian you are automatically a member of the universal or global church — you are a member of Christ's flock, his bride, his temple and his body. The Church (with a capital C) is the entire community of Christian believers worldwide, who have put their faith in Jesus and seek to follow his teachings.

However, the language of the New Testament suggests that people formed themselves into local groups called churches. Paul writes his letters to specific churches in local places, he gives instructions about how to resolve disputes in local gatherings and instructs believers to appoint elders and leaders who should exercise authority and care over specific groups of believers locally.

Because local churches together form the Church of Christ, they are to seek fellowship and accountability from other churches with whom they are confessionally one. In our case that would be the Reformed Churches Randburg (our mother Church) and the Reformed Churches in South-Africa.

3. Why join Cross Culture Church?

Cross Culture Church is a diverse church made up of Christians from many different geographical and cultural backgrounds and ages. We are a church within the Reformed tradition. This simply means that we trace our roots back to churches that rediscovered key biblical truths in the 16th Century across Europe and the wider world. In short, we see this as a time when Christian leaders called the church back to the essential teachings of the Bible.

Being a Reformed church means many things but some of the key distinctives would be:

1. **Scripture alone:** At Cross Culture Church we have a strong commitment to the authority of the Bible. No human leader or minister has an authority equal to or greater than the Word of God contained in the Bible. We seek to teach and practice only what can be supported by the Bible's teaching.
2. **Grace Alone:** We can only be saved by God's grace — we cannot contribute to or earn our salvation. It is not given to us based on our human achievements. As a result, grace is central to everything and saturates everything that we do and teach.
3. **Faith Alone:** We teach that justification before God is a one-time event that takes place through faith alone. Everyone who trusts in Christ by faith for salvation receives immediate and full forgiveness of all his or her sins. God's declaration of righteousness is the complete and final verdict for all who have genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

Every church has its own thumbprint. Cross Culture Church is likely to appeal to:

- sceptics or people who has been hurt by the Church and therefore have a lot of questions about God and the Bible;
- Christians who are looking for a Church family who will assist them in their task making disciples and who want to feel confident in exposing sceptic friends to their church;
- Christians who want to feel part of an active diverse church community — a diverse church family where people are loved and appreciated and given an opportunity to serve with their gifts, no matter who they are or where they come from; and
- Christian families: Parents who want to be equipped to disciple their Children well and children who are looking for a Church where they feel included and appreciated.

4. Who can join Cross Culture Church?

We welcome and receive all Christians, along with their children into membership, if they agree to our summary statement of faith (Appendix 1), make a public membership statement (Appendix 2) and sign our Church Covenant (Appendix 3).

We believe a Christian to be someone who:

- has repented and trusted in Christ's atoning death and resurrection as the sole basis for salvation; and
- shows evidence of continuous repentance in turning from sin and to Christ as their Saviour daily.

We believe that this faith needs to be tested by the elders and professed in a local Church upon which such a person, needs to be baptised into Christ and his Body (Acts 2:38) if

he/she was not previously baptised. If you are a Christian, or become a Christian through our ministry, but have not been baptised and/or professed your faith, you will be required to do so in order to become a member.

Children of believing parents (depending on their age and ability to take spiritual responsibility) are baptised (Acts 16:29-34) and disciplined to make a public profession of their faith when the Holy Spirit leads them to do so. They are seen as members of Cross Culture Church with the only exception that they not yet bear the full responsibility of membership or participate in the Lord's Supper until they have made a public profession of faith

5. What if I'm not ready to join?

Cross Culture Church has always valued the role and place of attendees who do not seek to become members of a specific local church. As leaders we would not wish for anyone to feel pressured into joining the church or to feel that they will be looked down on for not joining.

Regular attendees form a valuable part of the 'broader Cross Culture Church family', and actively contribute to the life and service of the church. We thank God for them. We recognise that due to the fast-paced and ever-changing nature of life in Joburg we will always have a Sunday gathering that is comprised of many newcomers, regular attendees and members.

6. How can you join Cross Culture Church?

It is our practice to occasionally arrange informal membership discussion groups. If you think you may be interested in Cross Culture Church membership, simply let any of the elders know:

- Chris De Vries
- Thomas Dreyer
- Brian Mclean

You could also speak with any of the deacons (see **Appendix 3** for a description of what the deacons do and how you could be involved):

- Anton Du Plessis
- Erna Dreyer
- Yolandé du Plessis

These discussions represent a relaxed, preliminary procedure without any strings attached. The intention is simply to:

- Understand each person's situation.
- Ensure that the interested people understand what membership of Cross Culture Church entails.
- Be satisfied that the criteria for membership will be met.

If the interested person was, or still is, a member of another church, it is our normal practice to contact or inform an appropriate church officer at that church, of their application, as a courtesy.

The final decision to accept members is taken by the eldership and then communicated to applicants. Once acceptance has been agreed in principle, this is made known to the wider church and a short ceremony of public welcome arranged, during a normal Sunday service.

7. What do we expect of members?

In Cross Culture Church, the responsibilities of church membership include the following:

- **commitment to Christ:** demonstrated in leading a life consistent with the gospel; personal discipleship; attitudes of respect toward church leaders; and harmony with other members;
- **commitment to the Lord's people:** seen regularly in attendance at Sunday; participate in a life group; supporting church programmes and events; practical love and care for other members/attendees; and tolerance towards one another on the non-central issues of Christian faith and practice; and
- **commitment to the Lord's work in Cross Culture Church:** expressed in prayer, use of spiritual gifts, the exercise of membership responsibilities and the financial support of the church.

No church is perfect and sometimes Christians become disaffected, 'fall out' or morally fail. If such circumstances did arise, the church would seek to exercise pastoral care and discipline with a gentle spirit, always with the aim of securing reconciliation and restoration.

In light of this we expect new members to be in full agreement with our membership covenant (Appendix 2).

8. What can you expect from us?

In becoming a church member, a person publicly expresses his/her commitment to that fellowship and identifies with its statement of faith, vision and values. At the same time the church undertakes to provide pastoral care and support, encouragement in the Christian faith, and the opportunity to discover and use the spiritual gifts of the new member.

There are some additional privileges and responsibilities of being a Cross Culture Church member, e.g.:

- there is a greater expectation of, and a responsibility towards church members;
- only members are eligible for some voting procedures or church offices, e.g. eldership;
- in times of need or crisis, support is more assured; and
- the opinions of members can carry more weight, e.g. in church business meetings.

9. Next steps?

This little booklet summarises a range of weighty issues that you really need to understand before becoming a member of Cross Culture Church. Perhaps read it again, noting things you are excited about and things that are not quite clear. It would be great if we could share this with each other at one of our informal membership discussion groups.

As elders, we pray that God will lead many people to become members of Cross Culture Church, committing themselves first to Him and then to his work here in Joburg.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Required for membership:

Cross Culture Church Summary Statement of faith

1. There is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. God is sovereign in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgement.
3. The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.
4. Since the fall, the whole of humankind is sinful and guilty, so that everyone is subject to God's wrath and condemnation.
5. The Lord Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son, is fully God; he was born of a virgin; his humanity is real and sinless; he died on the cross, was raised bodily from death and is now reigning over heaven and earth.
6. Sinful human beings are redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death once and for all time of their representative and substitute, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between them and God.
7. Those who believe in Christ are pardoned all their sins and accepted in God's sight only because of the righteousness of Christ credited to them; this justification is God's act of undeserved mercy, received solely by trust in him and not by their own efforts.
8. The Holy Spirit alone makes the work of Christ effective to individual sinners, enabling them to turn to God from their sin and to trust in Jesus Christ.
9. The Holy Spirit lives in all those he has regenerated. He makes them increasingly Christ-like in character and behaviour and gives them power for their witness in the world.
10. The one holy universal church is the Body of Christ, to which all true believers belong.
11. The Lord Jesus Christ will return in person, to judge everyone, to execute God's just condemnation on those who have not repented and to receive the redeemed to eternal glory.

Also refer to our confessional standards which are a requirement for serving in any leadership capacity:

- Heidelberg Confession
- Belgic Confession
- Canons of Dort
- Apostolic Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Athanasian Creed

Appendix 2

Membership Statement

In taking membership of Cross Culture Church, I do so expressing my belief in the Almighty and Eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and the Holy Spirit as my Sanctifier, Teacher and Comforter.

I accept the Word of God as my final rule in all matters of faith and conduct.

Sincerely, deliberately and of my own free will, I identify myself with Cross Culture Church, agree with the Church Covenant and promise that I will always seek to be a faithful member of the Body of Christ.

Appendix 3

Cross Culture Church Covenant

Having been born again by the Spirit of God and drawn to faith and repentance in the Lord Jesus Christ, we now, relying on God's grace, enter into covenant with one another as Christ's body:

We will seek to magnify the cross of Christ in all that we do, knowing that it is by the grace of God alone that our sins have been forgiven, our old nature put to death, and we have been raised to new life in Christ.

We will live our lives according to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, having submitted ourselves to God's Word and embraced this church's Statement of Faith as a trustworthy summary of biblical teaching.

We will seek to exemplify a true Christian community, caring for one another, admonishing one another, and bearing each other's burdens.

We will use our spiritual gifts in God honouring ways to build up the body.

We will strive to be faithful in the Word of God and prayer, studying the Scriptures privately and corporately, and praying for ourselves and others.

We will show the joy of new life in Christ, by active participation in the life of the church, through hearing the Word of God and partaking in the sacraments (communion and baptism), and by faithful attendance to worship, all to the glory of God.

We will give 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 walk in a spirit of Christian love in the congregation, seeking the things that make for unity, purity, and peace.

We will submit to the government of the church, to be guided spiritually, to be admonished and disciplined, if found to be delinquent either in doctrine or in life.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Appendix 4

What do the deacons do, and how could I be involved?

The word 'deacon' literally means 'to serve'. Deacons first appear in the Bible in Acts 6 with the purpose of serving some of the widows in the early church. The aim of the Deacons is to equip the church to serve those inside and outside the church and help with its practical running. Here are two things that the Deacons help oversee in which members might want to be involved:

- Mercy fund - The mercy fund is a financial fund managed by the Deacons. It has three purposes: 1) Immediate financial relief for those in urgent need. 2) Continued support for those in on-going difficulty - e.g. unemployment. This support will usually be for a set amount of time, and the person receiving mercy funds will, together with a deacon, draw up a plan to help them become self-sufficient again. In both of these cases, we follow the Biblical command (Gal 6:10) to give priority to those in the church and to other believers, but also make the mercy available to non-Christians. Financial support given in these cases is a gift, not a loan. 3) Covering the costs of running specific mercy ministries.
- Volunteering - The church is largely run by volunteers who are overseen in their ministries by the deacons. Ministries include children's ministry, music worship, welcoming, setting up the room for church, planning social events & the weekend away, cooking for the Sunday meal, and more. Volunteering in these ministries is both a good way to get to know others in the church, but more importantly to live out the Biblical command for the church to be a body that works together.