

Mission, Core Values and Vision for Calvary Baptist Church

By Pastor Duane Farley

What is the Church and what is it suppose to do? The word “Church” comes form the Anglo Saxon word “Kirk” which is derived from the Greek word *kyriakon* which means “belonging to the Lord.” So a person could think of “church” as a people or a building “belonging to the Lord.” But in the English New Testament, the word “church” comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means “assembly” or “congregation” and never refers to a building. Therefore, the “church” is the people who belong to Jesus Christ.

Defining what the church is can be a daunting task. What is even more intimidating is for one to try and define it concisely. I will attempt to do the nearly impossible and readily admit that much more could be added. The following is my definition of the church: The unified, universal, pure, and apostolic Church is comprised of all believers elected of the Father, redeemed by the Son through faith, and regenerated by the Spirit who places believers into Christ’s Body. Local churches are visible expressions of this universal body which exalt God, edify, and equip the saints through the Word of God that they might use their gifts, make disciples, minister mercy, and evangelize the unsaved; observe the initiatory ordinance of believers baptism and the continuing ordinance of communion; govern through congregational rule; and discipline preventively and correctively.

This definition gives the big picture of what the church should be and should do now and in the future. In corporate America, many companies have mission statements, core value statements, and vision statements. Aubrey Malphurs states that a mission statement answers the question what are we supposed to be doing? A statement of core values answers the question why do we do what we do? A vision statement deals with the issue of what kind of church would we like to be?¹ Malphurs and many other church leaders have embraced many models used in the business world and adapted them for the church. Certainly, we can learn from other spheres of life that will help us further the mission of the church. However, much of American Christianity has become imbalanced in its approach to ministry. It is true in one sense that the church is organized and thereby an organization. After all, the Bible addresses church government. Nevertheless, the church is much more than an organization. It is an organism. It is a body – the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col 2:19).

Therefore, formulaic approaches to ministry are insufficient as the be all and end all of ministry. People are people and thus they are not cogs in an organizational machine. The church is a living organism. In addition to this organic complexity, the Scriptural presents a tension of “already, not yet.” Positionally, the Christian is “already” forensically justified in God’s sight. The believer is “already” declared righteous (Rom 3:24-26). His legal status of righteous before God is a present reality and will never be altered. The penalty of sin has been removed. However, we know in practice we do not always act righteous. Practically, the Christian is “not yet” fully free from the power and presence of sin in his life. Scripture indicates that Christians are to pursue sanctification (Heb 12:14). This is a progressive process throughout our Christian

¹Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999).

lives which prepares us for heaven. Many theologians refer to progressive sanctification as living a life of mortification (killing more and more of our sins) and vivification (living more and more unto Christ). The “not yet” portion of this Scriptural tension will not be released until we are glorified. Then we will be free from the very presence of sin and be perfected like Christ (Phil 3:20-21). So, when thinking about the church we are thinking about a conflicted organism. We the church are an “already, not yet” organism.

All this to say, do not think of Calvary Baptist Church as a mere organization. It is much more than that. Nevertheless, it is helpful, as the organic and organizational elements interplay one with another, for us to understand who we are, why we do what we do, and where we need to go in the future. All of this is rooted in our mission. Fortunately, the Bible gives us our mission in the great commission. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.” To recast this into a mission statement we would say:

“The mission of Calvary Baptist Church is to lead others in Windsor Locks, North Hartford County, and beyond to faith in Christ and growth in Christlikeness for the glory and enjoyment of God.”

Though not comprehensive, the following eleven qualities are some key means by which we carry out that mission. With broad strokes I desire to paint a picture of what we are as well as what we can and should be for the glory of God. First, we must be...

1. A Bible-Preaching Church: Preaching that draws upon the Bible and points to Christ.

One of the battle cries during the Protestant Reformation was *Sola Scriptura* which means “Scripture alone.” We embrace this doctrine which teaches that the Bible is the only authoritative and sufficient source for all matters of our faith and practice. Paul wrote, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17). We believe that the Bible reveals God to us and how we are to respond to that revelation. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). Scripture should regulate or dictate all that we do as a church and as individual Christians. And the way (albeit from the world’s perspective it seems foolish) that the Word of God is communicated is through preaching (1 Cor 1:18). When Paul charged Timothy in his ministry he was direct and clear-cut. He simply charged him to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim 4:2). The proclaimed Word of God is primary and central to everything we are and do at Calvary Baptist Church. We even intentionally place a pulpit, not an altar or any other furniture, front and center to visibly display this fact. Further, foundational to Calvary Baptist Church is its commitment to expository, Christ-centered preaching. Because we embrace the authority and sufficiency of the Bible we believe that drawing out the meaning of a text is supreme, not the opinions of man. Citing an article from *The New Yorker*, Os Guinness said, “The preacher, instead of looking out upon the world, looks out upon public opinion, trying to find out what the

public would like to hear. Then he tries his best to duplicate that, and bringing his finished product into a marketplace in which others are trying to do the same.”² The preacher at Calvary Baptist Church will not fear men, but fear God and as a result preach His Holy Word. And yet, just quoting Bible verses can be dangerous. The fact is a preacher can make the Bible say anything he wants it to say if he strings enough proof-texts together. This method is dangerous and deceptive. Because though it has the veneer of being a “biblical sermon” in reality it is not the Word of God. It is only the opinion of a man using Scriptural texts to further his argument. Expository, Christ-centered preaching is the safeguard against this abuse. Let me define these terms: “expository” and “Christ-centered”. Haddon Robinson gives a classic definition of “expository preaching.” He states, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”³ Expository preaching is different from topical preaching in that the pastor strives to draw out the meaning of each text he preaches (exegesis), rather than imposing his ideas into a text (eisogesis). In other words, the expository preacher asks, “What does the Bible say?” rather than the topical preacher who asks, “I have a topic in mind I want to preach on, how can I find and use verses to support my preconceived notions?” After proper exegesis (keeping a text in its original context by studying out the historical and grammatical context in which a text was first given) the preacher then applies the ancient text to his modern audience. Typically, preaching series through a book of the Bible lends itself to expository preaching because it forces the preacher to keep every text in its proper context. There are occasions for the preacher to address topics. However, when preaching on topics the preacher should not preach topically. That is to say, even if he deals with a topical series, he preaches the individual sermons in an expositional manner. When the preacher cross references a text he needs to make sure he is not abusing it or taking it out of its context. Further, sermons that are expositional (drawing out the meaning of a text), will by necessity point people to Christ, thus they are “Christ-centered” sermons. When the pastor approaches texts from a biblical theology framework (keeping a particular text in the context of the whole Bible) he will set each sermon in a “creation-fall-redemption-restoration” frame and thus inevitably he will preach Christ-centered sermons. Preaching Christ-centered sermons was Christ’s method of interpreting the Bible and it should be ours because getting to Jesus is our only hope (Luke 24:27). Jesus said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). May the motto of preaching at Calvary Baptist always be “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor 1:23).

By God’s grace, Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that preaches the Bible which in turn points us to the Savior.

2. A Gospel-driven Church: The Gospel that transforms our lives.

The Gospel is the good news of reconciliation. We preach the Gospel to the unconverted. We preach the Gospel to ourselves (the converted) because Gospel saturated-lives lead to transformed, Christlike lives. The Gospel is not just for the unsaved to hear it is for the Church too. Paul said to the Corinthian believers “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel

²Os Guinness, *Dinning with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 59.

³Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand” (1 Cor 15:1). As believers we are to continue to stand in the Gospel. Christians are to constantly rehearse how the Gospel with all its ramifications applies to their lives. Our sanctification is nothing more than getting use our new status of being justified. It is becoming comfortable in our new skin of justified. The problem for us as Christians comes when we segregate the Gospel from our thinking and living and as a result we become guilt-driven or performance-driven, rather than Gospel-driven. C.J. Mahaney said it well: “If there’s anything in life that we should be passionate about, it’s the gospel. And I don’t mean passionate only about sharing it with others. I mean passionate about thinking about it, dwelling on it, rejoicing in it, and allowing it to color the way we look at the world. Only one thing can be of first importance to each of us. And only the gospel ought to be.”⁴ Also, Mahaney is helpful when he states, “The gospel isn’t one class among many that you’ll attend during your life as a Christian – the gospel is the whole building that all the classes take place in! Rightly approached, all the topics you’ll study and focus on as a believer will be offered to you ‘within the walls’ of the glorious gospel.”⁵

By God’s grace, Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that lives according to the Gospel by proclaiming it to others and ourselves.

3. A Praying-Church: Prayer that shows dependence.

At all levels (corporately, small groups, families, and individually), both privately and publicly, we desire to be a church marked by prayer because we are so dependent for the Lord’s help. Martin Luther, the great Reformer said it well when he said, “As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.”⁶ The most esteemed Puritan theologian John Owen gives us a good challenge as well. He said, “Pray as you think. Consciously embrace with your heart every gleam of light and truth that comes to your mind. Thank God for and pray about everything that strikes you powerfully.” The reason we take a large amounts of time for prayer on Wednesday evenings, during worship services, Sunday School, Saturday prayer meetings and on other occasions is because we must constantly tell “Our Father” we need Him (Matt 6:9). We are given this command: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). Our desire is to be a church comprised of people who spiritually inhale and exhale prayers throughout the day. By voicing our prayers of confession, praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession we are granted the pleasure of discovering more of God’s glory and seeing the power of God unleashed more and more in our lives. A.T. Pierson commented, “Every new Pentecost has had its preparatory period of supplication....God has compelled his saints to seek Him at the throne of grace, so that every new advance might be so plainly due to His power that even the unbeliever might be constrained to confess: ‘Surely this is the finger of God!’”⁷ Therefore, prayer is not a filler in our worship services, but taken seriously and important enough for us to be instructed in how to do properly.

⁴C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life: Experiencing the Power of the Gospel* (Portland: Multnomah, 2002), 20-21.

⁵*Ibid.*, 75-76. Also see Milton Vincent’s *A Gospel Primer for Christians* (Riverside, CA: Mission Reprographics, 2006). This primer is a great tool in aiding the Christian in applying the Gospel to everyday life.

⁶John Blanchard, comp., *Gathered Gold* (Welwyn, Hertfordshire, England: Evangelical Press, 1984), 227.

⁷A.T. Pierson, *The New Acts of the Apostles* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1894), 352ff.

By God's grace, Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that saturates every facet of ministry in desperate prayers of dependence on Christ. Individually, corporately, and globally, we strive to intercede for the effectiveness of our church, for the needs of its people, for the needs of our community, for the needs of our nation, for the needs of our world, and for our missionaries who seek to reach it for Christ.

4. An Evangelizing Church: Evangelism that makes disciples.

Earlier I quoted the Great Commission and said that part of the mission of Calvary Baptist Church is to lead others in Windsor Locks, North Hartford County, and beyond to faith in Christ. For many, personal evangelism and corporate evangelism is a difficult thing. This is why we need the Gospel to be constantly rattling around in our minds and hearts so that out of the overflow of God's grace in our own lives we desire to share that same message of grace with others. Evangelism is the pink elephant in the room of our Christian lives many times. It is in our minds as we rub shoulders with the lost and yet we try to ignore the need to acknowledge it. This is a challenge because from the inception of the church to the present we are to be "witnesses in [our] Jerusalem and in [our] Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The place we need to start is in our Jerusalem. Jesus said, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). The Lord is sending us to our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, fellow students, and acquaintances as evangelists. As a church we need to equip ourselves, but at the end of the day we can have all the equipment and all the knowledge of how to evangelize successfully, but we've still got to do it. Fortunately, we are not left to our own strength in this regard. The same Holy Spirit who empowered believers according to Acts 1:8 is the same Holy Spirit who indwells and thereby will empower us today. Moreover, Jesus gave us this promise as we seek to do evangelism that makes disciples: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt 28:20). The church has a responsibility to train you, give you opportunities, be wise and even innovative in finding ways to help you reach the generations the Lord has called us to reach. Preaching from the pulpit, door-to-door evangelism, evangelism-training courses, canvassing, welcoming guests as they attend here, servant-evangelism events, and other church-wide evangelism events are all necessary, good and we will do them. But the majority of fruit is going to be seen from us getting involved in the lives of people, showing we care, and letting our light shine before them rather than hiding it (Matt 5:14-16). Let these words of C.H. Spurgeon be a challenge to us congregation.

If I never won souls, I would sigh till I did. I would break my heart over them if I could not break their hearts. Though I can understand the possibility of an earnest sower never reaping, I cannot understand the possibility of an earnest sower being content not to reap. I cannot comprehend any one of you Christian people...being satisfied without results.

By God's grace Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that shares with thousands in the Windsor Locks and North Hartford areas the salvation which is ours by grace alone, by caring for others, by witnessing in the power of the Holy Spirit, and by proclaiming God's truth in love to all our neighbors.

5. A Disciple-Making Church: Discipleship that develops disciples.

The second half of evangelism is discipleship. The purpose of evangelism is discipleship. For us to only reach the lost with the Gospel, but not make them followers of

Christ is not fully carrying out the Great Commission. As previously mentioned the Great Commission clearly states, “Make disciples” (Matt 28:19). It makes sense that the Lord Jesus should say these words before ascending back to the father. These parting words to His disciples reflect what he had done for the last three years. He poured His life into these men. It is significant to note that Jesus gave the responsibility to these men and us as the church today to make disciples. Robert E. Coleman explains, “It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him. This revealed immediately the direction his...strategy would take. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. Men were to be his method of winning the world to God.”⁸ Along similar lines Leroy Eims notes, “These men [the disciples] were [Christ’s] work. His ministry touched thousands, but He trained twelve men. He gave His life on the cross for millions, but during the three and a half years of His ministry He gave His life uniquely to twelve men.”⁹ So, the Lord Jesus poured His life into these twelve very ordinary men who had weaknesses just like we do. These men in turn then multiplied themselves as they poured their time and energy into others, the church grew, and the world has never been the same. This biblical method of discipleship seems to be a method of multiplication and it should be the method of Calvary Baptist Church. The goal is for us to look at discipling the “enth” generation, not just the person we are discipline right in front of us. After one individual has disciplined another person you now have two mentors. These two individuals then disciple two more. Now you have four individuals who can disciple four more etc. In time, many people will have had a lot of quality time poured into them which they can in turn pour into other disciples. There is clear Scriptural support for this multiplication approach. Paul wrote to Timothy the following: “And the thing that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2). There were four discipleship generations represented by this verse—Paul, many witnesses, Timothy, and faithful men. Paul also states in his epistle to the Ephesians, “And he (Christ) gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers (pastor-teachers); For (the purpose of) the perfecting (equipping) of the saints, for (the purpose of doing) the work of the ministry, for (the purpose of) the edifying of the body of Christ ” (Eph. 4:11-12). So the pastor’s gift and responsibility is to equip the saints in order for them to carry out the work of the ministry. Besides clear statements in Scripture which encourage discipleship, we also see it lived out in flesh and blood. Jesus and His disciples are the most obvious example. But, we also see it demonstrated with Peter’s discipleship of Mark, Elijah’s mentoring Elisha, and Paul discipling Timothy and Titus. All this makes common logical sense. As the old Indian proverb teaches, you can catch a fish for a hungry man and feed him for a day or you can teach that man how to fish and he will be able to feed himself for the rest of his life. Christians must learn how to feed themselves spiritually. We need to be disciplined and then turn around and pour our lives into other believers.

By God’s grace Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that develops Christlike disciples who think rightly about Christ and follow rightly after Him through various Bible studies, Sunday School, and individual and small group discipleship.

6. A Gift-Exercising Church: Ministering to the body of Christ.

⁸Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1993), 27.

⁹Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 28.

Scripture gives us various lists of the spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28; Eph 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:10-11). It is highly probable that these passages are not exhaustive lists of all the spiritual gifts. In other words, they illustrate the various gifts the Holy Spirit has given to the Church as He wills (1 Cor 12:11). It is important when talking about spiritual gifts to differentiate between spiritual gifts and natural talents. First, spiritual gifts and natural talents differ in that only the regenerate can have spiritual gifts. God's Word says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). So, spiritual gifts are not hereditary like natural talents. Further, talents and gifts differ in that spiritual gifts are for the purpose of edifying other believers. In other words, the difference between an unbeliever's abilities and a believer's gifts is that gifts are used to spiritually build up other believers. The abilities of unbelievers are used for self-glory. It only builds up the person performing the ability. Paul states clearly the purpose of spiritual gifts when he says they are endowed by God "for (the purpose of) the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). The apostle states this purpose again three more times in 1 Corinthians when he says that spiritual gifts are for the common good of the church (1 Cor 12:7) and that the church may be edified (1 Cor 14:5, 12). To ensure that there is interdependence between members of the body of Christ no one believer has all the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:14-21) nor is any one of the gifts given to all believers (1 Cor 12:14-21). The result of this fact is simple. Members of a church need each other. All spiritual gifts are important (1 Cor 12:22-26). The Holy Spirit gives gifts to enable Christians to minister effectively in their generation. The church functions through spiritual gifts, just as a body functions through its various parts. Therefore, all Christians with the help of the church and its leadership are responsible for discovering, developing and using their spiritual gifts in ministry. New members should know up front that they are expected to get involved. The church's responsibility is to help them get connected with a ministry or various ministries in the church by assessing their spiritual gifts and assimilating them into appropriate ministries. Everyone can and should serve in some capacity in the church. A spectator attitude toward church membership should be discouraged. All the members of the body of Christ care for one another, rejoice with one another, hurt for one another etc. Because, if gifts are not done in love for others, they are of none effect (1 Cor 13).

By God's grace, Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that brings others into the membership of our covenant community and assimilates these new members into ministries according to their spiritual gifts.

7. An Equipping Church: Equipping the saints for ministry.

Most of us can relate to not having the right tool for a task. We know what it is like to try and twist a screw with a flathead screwdriver when we really need a Philips screwdriver. We can make due in such situations, but not having the proper tool in other situations can be the difference between life and death. The Army Ranger who is repelling down a wall as he invades the enemy is in big trouble if he has a deficient rope or harness. The heart patient is in big trouble if his surgeon does not have the right scalpel. The heart surgeon cannot say, "Well, I don't have the right scalpel, but hey at least I've got my Swiss Army Knife. It will do." This the same knife that he yesterday to cut the fishing line when he was fishing at the local lake. Admittedly, these examples are probably unrealistic. Nevertheless, the point stands. If you do not have the right equipment for a task you could be in big trouble. As members, we are to do

the work of ministry and this work is paramount because the souls of people are at stake (Eph 4:12). At Calvary Baptist Church, we do not embrace the notion that only the pastor is the minister. We are all ministers or priests who do the work of the ministry (2 Pet 2:9). Paul puts it this way: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting (equipping) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12). According to this text the pastor’s job description is not to do all the work of the ministry himself. This approach to ministry is not biblical and common sense tells us it is counter-productive. Rather, he is to equip saints that they might be co-laborers with him in the work of the ministry. As inspired Scripture teaches us doctrine, reproves us, corrects us, and instructs us in righteousness we will be properly equipped for every good work of ministry (2 Tim 3:16-17). God’s plan for effective ministry is everyone being properly equipped for ministry and then use his or her gifts in ministry. We work better when we are properly equipped and when we are working together. The result of the this approach is glorious: the body of Christ is built up (Eph 4:12). As God’s Word is poured into you through preaching, teaching in Sunday School, in Bible studies, seminars, and small group discipleship the purpose is that you might be equipped to more effectively minister in ushering, in greeting, in singing in the choir, in teaching others, in serving, in evangelizing, in worshipping etc. All of this edifies the church and gives glory to Jesus Christ who said He will build His church (Matt 16:18).

By God’s grace Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that discovers the spiritual gifts of all members, placing them in the right place of ministry, and training them to effectively accomplish their ministry.

8. An Authentic Church: Fellowship that fosters authentic community.

Our fellowship is in the Gospel which transforms us and as a result allows us to be authentic with one another. We are all sinners seeking to grow in grace (2 Pet 3:18). A means of grace is the church. We need each other to grow in grace. The author of Hebrews says, “And let us consider one another to provoke (spur on one another) unto love and to good works” (Heb 10:24). In other words, we should be doing soul-care for one another. Instead of hiding behind shells or facades we are real with one another. In love we seek to admonish and encourage one another unto godly living for God’s glory alone (Rom 15:14; Heb 10:25). We are saints in community seeking sanctification together (Heb 12:14). This is a key reason why being here and participating in community is essential. We should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together because we need to be exhorting one another (Heb 10:25). Many Christians do not see the need to attend or join a church in membership. Yet, as believers we desperately need community. We need its love, edification, encouragement, admonishment, affirmation, and accountability. You cannot grow as God wants you to grow if you are not intimately tied to the means of grace provided by the church. At best, believers who do not enter into authentic community with other Christians are invariably misshapen and deformed spiritually. And perhaps their label of Christian should be called into question. God’s Word says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:14). A mark of a true Christian is his love for other Christians. John says if you do not love other Christians you are not a Christian. So we must ask the question, can a person be a Christian if he does not love the brethren enough to be with them and enter into authentic community with them? To love someone is to desire to be with them.

Those who do not desire to be with other Christians are most likely not Christians. So you see, it is in the DNA of true believers to foster authentic community with other followers of Jesus. What does such a community look like? The early church helps picture it for us in Acts.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:41-47).

You can see that they were a pretty tight knit group and you can see why the church grew daily. This is authentic community and the world is craving it today as it did then. Another picture we are given of the church that highlights this idea of community is the body (1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col 2:19). As the body, there is a built in interdependence in the church. Unity is necessary. The legs and the arms cannot separate from the body and do their own thing. The members of the body need each other. Another metaphor for the church is that of a family. Scripture refers to us as sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters of one another (1 Tim 5:1-2; 2 Cor 6:18). And like a family we take care of each other's physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We should be like a family, which encourages one another and loves one another. This has got to start in our nuclear families. We need to be a church that is family friendly and teaches the distinctive roles we each play in our families to bring glory to God (Eph 5:22-6:4; Col 3:18-21; 1 Pet 3:1-7). Families or as Scripture often calls them "households" were the basic units of Christian community from which the church grew (Acts 11:14; 16:15, 31-33; 1 Cor 1:16). So as our households foster authentic community it should extend into our church family. We need to intentionally seek authentic community as a family. This means there needs to be meaningful and intentional interaction across generational lines. Our teens in our youth group need the senior saints in our church and vice versa. There is much mutual benefit they can offer each other. As I have been trying to outline a philosophy of youth ministry this is a component that the whole church must hear. We want to avoid a youth subculture in our church. For that matter, we want to avoid any kind of subculture in the church (a parents subculture, a singles subculture, a young marrieds subculture, a senior saints subculture). That does not mean that we have to do every activity together, but there does need to be intentionality in connecting with others out of our natural comfort zone. So in an effort for intergenerational community we will plan activities at the church for everyone. And let me just challenge everyone. Young people seek out relationships with older folks as well as your peers and older saints seek out relationships with the younger. Those who are younger hear your responsibility from 1 Peter 5:5: "Ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder." And hear your responsibility those who are older. For women: "The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children (Titus 2:3-4). And for men: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). What I am trying to say, we

need the older discipling the younger. Now the main responsibility falls upon parents in this regard. But, as extended family we help out the moms and dads here. We come alongside of parents and help in the discipleship process. We are going to need some of you to rise to the challenge of stepping out of comfort zones and getting involved with the youth like a father or grandfather, mother or grandmother, like a brother or sister. We're family here. So whether in formal church activities or small group discipleship or Bible studies or informal chats that take place at Friendly's or Starbucks we need to cross generational barriers and get involved in each others lives.

By God's grace Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that is a real church for real people facing real hurts and real struggles. Our goal is to mutually encourage one another in genuine Christian community and edification by accepting one another, forgiving one another, and providing soul care for one another.

9. A Worshipping Church: Corporate worship that focuses on God.

Worship is about God. The psalmist urges us: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Ps 95:6). Worship is about glorifying God by enjoying Him. Worship satisfies the deepest longings of our hearts when it is all about God. Therefore, the aim of Calvary Baptist Church is to be God-centered in our worship. When we gather it is not about human performance, but standing in Awe of our God and having his majesty wash over our dry souls and so doing find ultimate pleasure in Him. Worship is such a huge area of discussion because if understood properly it is not just about Sunday morning services. It is about a way of life 24/7 as individuals, as families, and as a church. The Gospel of John tells us, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). There are no time categories in that verse. Worship is an ongoing activity for the believer. The word "worship" comes from the Old English word worthship. In other words, "worship" means to ascribe supreme worth to God. In worship you are saying, "God you are worthy." When examining Scripture, we see characteristics of worship surface. It is God-centered. Therefore, worship is about seeking to honor God. When we leave a service we should not ask, what did I get out of the service, but how did I do in my work of honoring the Lord. Also, worship is Gospel-centered. In the Old Testament worship was centered on the Exodus event. In the New Testament it is centered on Jesus Christ, His atonement for sins, His resurrection, and the promise of new life to believers. Worship is Trinitarian as well. God-centered worship is always worship in the name of Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Our worship should be clearly directed to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Also, Worship is vertical and horizontal. It is vertical in that it is directed to our triune God for His pleasure. It is horizontal in that it is for the edification of the saints. Theologian D.A. Carson gives a good definition of worship.

Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so. This side of the Fall, human worship of God properly responds to the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made. While all true worship is God-centered, Christian worship is no less Christ-centered. Empowered by the Spirit and in line with the stipulations of the new covenant, it manifests itself in all our living, finding its impulses in the gospel,

which restores our relationship with our Redeemer-God and therefore also with our fellow image-bearers, our co-worshippers.¹⁰

By God's grace Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that is God-centered in its worship on the Lord's Day and every other day of the week. Our goal in corporate worship is to establish a pattern in our prayers, Scripture reading, observing the ordinances, singing, studying, teaching, preaching, and listening to preaching that draws attention to the glory of God's grace. This corporate worship pattern then can be adapted and followed in individual and family worship throughout the week.

10. A Missions-Minded Church: Missions that goes into all the world.

Closely tied to worship is missions. Pastor John Piper helps us on this point.

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man....Worship therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God.¹¹

God's Word declares, "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy" (Ps 67:3-4). Piper goes on to state:

The most passionate heart for God in all the universe is God's heart. This truth, more than any other I know, seals the conviction that worship is the fuel and goal of missions. The deepest reason why our passion for God should fuel missions is that God's passion for God fuels missions. Missions is the overflow of our delight in God because missions is the overflow of God's delight in being God.¹²

God has a missionary heart because God is consumed with glorifying and enjoying Himself. Thus, He wants all creation to join in that glorification and enjoyment. He wants the fame of His name being declared in all the earth that all peoples may glorify and enjoy Him. If we are enjoying God, missions will come naturally because we want others to experience the delight we find in God. God's missionary heart is seen all throughout the Bible. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal 4:4). In a sense, because the Father so loved the world He sent His Son to be a missionary (John 3:16). Missions is God's heartbeat and it ought to be ours as well. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Great Commission starts off with this imperative "Go." The Great Commission is a great assumption. The natural assumption for the believer is I am suppose to go. That is the default position. And we had better not stay here until we have sufficiently wrestled with God about going to the ends of the earth. We need to teach and raise our children under this assumption – "Go, unless God clearly tells you not to." Missionaries ought to be our children's heroes. Of course, the Lord does not call all of us to go, but He does call all of us to be partners in the Gospel's advance (Phil 1:5). We are to partner

¹⁰D.A. Carson *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 26.

¹¹John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker), 17.

¹²Ibid., 21.

passionately in our prayers, with our money, through volunteerism, missions projects, and going ourselves on short-term mission trips.

By God's grace Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that reaches, evangelizes, baptizes, and serves as many people around the world as we can, through the means of praying, giving, sending, and going unto the ends of the earth, until Christ comes again.

11. A Serving Church: Mercy ministry that serves all peoples.

Serving others in need springs from a heart of gratitude. Scripture says, "Serve [the LORD] in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you" (1 Sam 12:24). You serve others because of God's mercy in your life. Thus, we call such ministry "mercy ministry". Being servant minded starts in the church. Paul urges, "Brethren...serve one another" (Gal 5:13). And again he says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil 2:5-7). How did Jesus think? How are we to think? Like a servant to others. And this extends beyond the church as well. We are called as fishers of men to win souls and in so doing we are to minister to the whole person – not just spiritually, but also physically and emotionally. Jesus makes it abundantly clear in Matthew 25:31-46 that if we turn away the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the needy, the oppressed, the hurting, the sinful, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the widow, the orphan, and the prisoner it is like us turning Him away. Micah 6:8 declares, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" May our church be marked by mercy to others. The true mark of character is when we give of ourselves to others we know can give us nothing in return. And this is not always easy. We sit in our padded pews, with our well-pressed clothes, with full stomachs and converse with people who are like us. But, the real question is, what about serving the homeless with smelly breath and clothes or the pregnant teenage girl or the foul-mouth prisoner or shaking drug addict? This is radical ministry because it is Christlike ministry. Donald Whitney poses a strong challenge to us:

Wanted: Gifted volunteers for difficult service in the local expression of the Kingdom of God. Motivation to serve should be obedience to God, gratitude, gladness, forgiveness, humility, and love. Service will rarely be glorious. Temptation to quit place of service will sometimes be strong. Volunteers must be faithful in spite of long hours, little or no visible results, and possibly no recognition except from God in eternity.¹³

By God's grace, Calvary Baptist Church will be a church that places others before ourselves inside and outside the church. Our aim is to be servant-hearted in our evangelism of the lost and in our edification of the saints.

Accomplishing the aforementioned aspects of our church's core values and vision can be thought of in terms of constructing a building. The aim is to take people from joining God's construction team to working for God's construction team. Ephesians 2:20 describes the church as a building. God uses the church to build His church. People need to be encouraged to join

¹³Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 129.

God's construction team (evangelism). Once joining the team, Christians need to be edified (told they can do the work of ministry), equipped (given the needed tools to construct for God), and exercise their work abilities (building up other believers and adding new stones to God's construction project). The core values and vision of Calvary Baptist Church seem daunting and are impossible to achieve in the least measure without the energizing grace of our God aiding us. Because of His amazing grace, God is able to use the weak servants of this local church to make known His glory.

By His grace alone, Calvary Baptist Church will continue to grow towards being a Bible-preaching, Gospel-driven, praying, evangelizing, disciple-making, gift-exercising, equipping, authentic, worshipping, missions-minded, and serving church.