



MEMBERSHIP TRACK

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INTRODUCTION

The church is God's plan for spreading the Gospel. Jesus did not say that he would build a publishing company, a worship band or a denomination...He said he would build his church. (Matthew 16:18). Jesus is so closely identified with the church that he said Saul was persecuting Him when he was persecuting the church. If Jesus so closely identified with the church, then we should too.

The church is much more than a church service. The local church is a community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, are organized under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching, worship, and observing the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, and are unified by the Spirit and scattered to fulfill the Great Commission.

THE HISTORY OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The church began without a formal membership process (converts were essentially automatic members of the church), but organizational issues soon arose (see Acts 15). Belief and behavior became issues as the Gospel spread to the Gentiles. Over time, baptism was delayed until the candidate got their beliefs and behaviors straightened out. By the end of the first century, an early version of the catechism was in existence. Amazingly, the church grew rapidly while membership was somewhat difficult.

MEMBERSHIP IN MANY CHURCHES

1. Full of promises but lacking accountability. Membership classes and covenants are popular in many churches. But too often, people hear about the requirements, sign the covenant, and promise to do certain things, only to never begin serving or giving or living out the terms of the covenant. Furthermore, many of the churches don't have ongoing conversations with people after the fact.
2. Just a status symbol. Many people choose to officially join a specific church as a symbol of status or importance. Whether it's for financial, political, or denominational reasons, this is a poor motivation for aligning with a local church.
3. Unvalued hoop or step. In some churches, especially newer ones, membership is not valued at all. Many people want to attend a church, but when pressed to become official members and live in a true Biblical community, they push away. Many today are averse to the idea of official membership in a local church, either because they do not think it is Biblical or it is not perceived to be useful. Churches also devalue membership when they have membership rolls that greatly inflate their average attendance.

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THE BIBLICAL BASIS AND VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

1. The dominant metaphor for the church throughout the New Testament is a *body*. 1 Corinthians 12:12-19 paints this important picture of the church. With Jesus as the head, every Christian is a part of the body of Christ. Each part is important; each part has a function.
2. 15:2, 1 John 3:23, Romans 12:10 teach us that Christians are called to love each other. In fact, the Bible says that the world will know that we are Christians by the love that we have for each other.
3. Romans 12:15, Ephesians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, Hebrews 3:13, James 5:26, 1 Peter 4:9-10 all describe the kind of relationships that Christians are to have with each other. While faith is personal, it was never meant to be private. Christians need *community* with other believers.

These first three things do not *depend* on church membership. In other words, it's possible to have a role in the church and a relationship with other Christians without being an official member of the church. Certainly, membership can and should enhance these things, but it must be stated that Christian love and acts of service can happen apart from membership. However, the Bible contains several other arguments that lead us to believe that membership in a local church is something that God wants for Christians today.

4. In Matthew 18:15-17, the "church" appears to be the final court of appeal in when it comes to disagreements between Christians. 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 describes the formal removal process of putting someone out of the church. It seems logical to assume that a formal removal process presupposes a formal inclusion process. Determining who is inside the church and who is outside the church implies that there is a formal recognition system. Church discipline in the Bible is a strong reason to believe in a membership process.
5. The Bible says that shepherds are to know the condition of their flocks. Perhaps this is why early church kept a list of widows connected to the church (1 Timothy 5:9). We know that God also keeps a "master list" of everyone who is truly a Christian (the Lamb's Book of Life).
6. Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 teach Christians are to obey and respect their pastors and spiritual leaders. One reason that people avoid church membership is that they have a problem with spiritual authority. It would not be practical to obey EVERY spiritual leader in America, however, the Bible is clear that we should obey and respect OUR spiritual leaders and pastors. This presupposes some sort of inclusion in a local church.
7. In Acts 20:28, Paul tells elders how they are to care for their flock. 1 Peter 5:2-3 also provides clear instructions to pastors caring for their flocks. Just as Christians have a responsibility to their leaders, church leaders have a responsibility to their flock. Again, this presupposes some sort of membership. I am not accountable for the spiritual health and well-being of every Christian in the world, but as a pastor, I am accountable to care for those in my church. So, Christians are to obey and respect their spiritual leaders, and pastors are to intentionally shepherd and lead those in their charge.

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Finally, there is one other compelling reason for church membership, and though there is no specific Bible verse, it's an important fact that runs throughout the New Testament.

8. By joining ourselves with God's people in a local church, we show that we want to join with them to help and be helped, encourage and be encouraged, rebuke and be rebuked. We show that we want to love God's people and be loved by them. Membership is a visible commitment.

INVITED TO MEMBERSHIP

Instead of membership being a series of check boxes or the result of a class that a person takes, membership at 970 Church is a sign that you are already committed. At 970 Church folks are invited to become members because they have already demonstrated the characteristics of a member.

- It's more of a back-end acknowledgement rather than a front-end promise.
- It connects membership to relationship. It's not about a roll; it's about a relationship. Small Group leaders and volunteer team leaders play an important role in the process.
- Leaders in our church invite people to become members. People who show an interest in membership are first encouraged to connect with a Small Group or a volunteer team.

The goal is not membership...it is loving God and loving people. Formal membership simply recognizes that these things are occurring.

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THE REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERSHIP

At the basic level, membership is a commitment to a local church and part of a much larger commitment to Christ.

1. There's a demonstrable commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior. You're affirming that you are indeed a Christian who is desiring to follow Jesus, and you've been baptized in water to publicly show your allegiance to Him (or will seek to do it as soon as possible).
2. You're committed to the mission and vision of 970 Church. You know our mission, and you are playing an active part in leading people from where they are to where God wants them to be. This means you're serving somewhere, and you're financially supporting the church.
3. You are committed to growing in your faith. No matter how long you've been a Christian, there are still steps you can take to become more like Christ. As a member, you're acknowledging that you're taking an active role in your personal discipleship process – either through participation in a Small Group, by taking classes, or by personal, spiritual disciplines.
4. You will actively participate in corporate and individual worship, to develop regular personal habits of Bible study and prayer, to promote the unity and integrity of the Body of Christ, and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who are far from him.

THE MEMBERSHIP PROCESS AT 970 CHURCH

1. A person is identified by a Staff member, Small Group leader or Ministry Team leader or the person expresses interest in membership. There are no church membership transfers. All potential members are invited to complete the membership process.
2. They are invited to visit to 970.Church/membership where they watch a series of 10-minute videos from the pastor.
3. They read this manual.
4. They complete an online membership application, which includes the opportunity for them to share their salvation story, ministry experiences, and asks about their personal faith goals. They also identify their Small Group leader or Volunteer Team leader who is sponsoring them.
5. We check their ministry involvement and giving levels and have a conversation, if necessary.
6. Schedule water baptism if never baptized.
7. Membership applications are approved by the pastor and ratified by the Board.
8. New members are welcomed into the fellowship in a Sunday morning service.

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WHAT KIND OF CHURCH IS 970 CHURCH?

**This church was created for YOU!
You belong here before you believe
You belong here before you behave
You belong here among friends
YOU BELONG at 970 Church!**

At 970 Church we love God and love people. We are passionate about introducing people to Jesus and inviting them to live as his disciples. We love to introduce them to the non-religious message of Jesus and invite them to a radical way of living out one's faith.

We live in a valley where a large percentage of the young adults (20 and 30-somethings) have checked out of church or know nothing of the Christian faith. We live in a valley where 42 percent of the population aren't involved in any church and 23 percent have decreased their involvement with their faith in the last 10 years and simply don't see the traditional, institutional church as relevant or valuable to their lives. We intend to reach out to these neighbors and offer genuine friendship, compassionate service and the Good News of Jesus.

Many have remarked that 970 Church is different than most of the other churches they've been a part of or have visited. A lot of it has to do with what we value. We believe every church needs to operate according to the Scripture and follow the Spirit's unique leading for them. Here are a few things that are part of 970 Church's unique DNA:

We are

- orthodox in belief, but unorthodox in practice.
- more afraid of missing opportunities than making mistakes. We are a lab where most of what we do is an experiment. If the Kingdom of God had departments, we'd be R&D.
- more concerned with offending God than offending the world.
- The church. We don't go to church. We are not building or program-centric.

We value

- God's presence over our performance.
- seeking God over impressing people.
- what God can do over what we can do.
- truth over relevance.

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We believe

- that Jesus meant what he said to all his disciples (then and now).
- that if you want to reach people no one is reaching, you must do things no one is doing. A church that stays within its four walls isn't a church at all.
- in the power of God-given dreams and that 970 Church is a dream factory and a launching platform.
- that God is still in the miracle-working business and that the Holy Spirit uses us to demonstrate his power.
- The Gospel is relational and so is the church.

We want

- to be more known for what we're for than what we're against.
- to celebrate each person as invaluable and irreplaceable in the eyes of God.
- to love like Jesus. Loving them when they least expect it and least deserve it.
- to be great at the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
- to make the name of Jesus famous in our generation and in our community.

We pray

- like it depends on God, and work like it depends on us.
- believing that God is able and willing to answer our prayers.

We hope

- to provide a reason for the hope within us to those that are lost and without hope in this world.
- to become a part of the personal dream God has given you, and we invite you to become a part of the corporate dream God has given us.

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PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

970 CHURCH EXISTS TO FACILITATE LIFE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE LOVE AND POWER OF JESUS.

This facilitation includes the transformation of individuals, families, neighborhoods, communities, and nations by creating social structures and events, by offering Biblical instruction and training, and by supporting the mission of the people of 970 Church.

Since we are intentionally trying to create more of an organic faith community rather than an institutional, location-centric church, we felt it was important for us to state the purposes for the organizational components of our church besides the obvious cultural, legal and tax reasons. These purposes are to support and facilitate the mission of the people of God rather than having the purpose of the people of the church to support and further the mission of the institutional church.

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MISSION OF THE PEOPLE

970 CHURCH – WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH

GREAT COMMANDMENT

- Love God ([Mk 12:29-30](#))
- Love People: ([Mk 12:31](#); [Eph 5:1-2](#))

GREAT COMMISSION (BOTH NEAR AND FAR)

- Go and Make Disciples ([Mt 28:18-20](#))
- Preach the Good News ([Mk 16:15](#), [Lk 24:46-48](#))
- Witness to Christ and His Kingdom ([Acts 1:8](#))
- Demonstrate the Power of Christ ([Mt 10:8](#))

A group of Pharisees were questioning Jesus trying to discredit him. One of them, a scribe, asked Jesus, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answering him said that “all the Law and the Prophets” depend on these two commandments. Jesus essentially boiled everything down to two simple yet powerful statements: Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ([Mk 12:29-31](#)) The scribe’s response is also interesting because he not only validates the statements by restating them, he then goes on to offer that loving God and loving others “is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Then affirming the scribe’s insightful answer Jesus said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Jesus was not talking to unbelievers, these were the Pharisees the most committed, most religious, most zealous, and most educated in the scriptures of all the Jews.

Just before his ascension, Jesus assembled the disciples on a mountain top. He gave them concise instructions and defined their mission as a continuation of His mission on Earth – to go to all people and nations, preach the Good News and make disciples. These instructions have come to be known as the Great Commission.

We at 970 Church believe that they apply to us individually as well as to the corporate gathering of his disciples known as the Church. So, if these statements are Jesus’ reduction of our faith and the mission of his Church, then we at 970 Church intend to use them as the foundation for everything we attempt to become and everything we attempt to do. The unpacking of the mission of the people of 970 Church (both individually and collectively) begins with these statements.

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OUR VISION

LIVING AS AN AUTHENTIC DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHANGES YOUR ETERNITY, YOUR LIFE AND YOUR WORLD.

- **Change a life, impact a family.**
- **Change a family, infect a neighborhood.**
- **Change a neighborhood, transform a city.**
- **Change a city, influence a region.**
- **Change a region, sway a nation.**
- **Change a nation, change the world.**

We want to recognize that there are distinct cultures present within our local geography. By using the word culture, we also want to make it clear that we don't view culture as evil or something to stay away from, but rather; it's something we affirm and recognize as integral to human society. When we refer to culture, we are including ethnicity, generation, profession, music, art, film, sports, literature, social gathering places and other aspects of social culture, as well as the normal ebb and flow of community life. We don't require or expect people to enter in to a "Christian" culture but rather our intent is to enter their culture and serve them as Christ's ambassadors. Our desire is that through us the Holy Spirit will inform, engage and transform the people of these cultures.

Finally, our mission to our communities is conditioned and shaped by the unique cultures of the Western Slope and the Grand Valley. The Apostle Paul described this when he said, "I have become all things to all people, that by all means, I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." (**1 Cor 9:22-23** )

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

What a church believes is important. It's the very foundation for how they see God, how they see people, and ultimately how they intend to impact the world. Below you'll find some of our basic beliefs as a church. If you have more questions we invite you to speak with one of the pastors or attend our membership class where you not only hear more in-depth about what we believe and who we are, but you also have an opportunity to ask questions.

Who we are as individuals and what we do as a church must always be securely rooted in what we believe about God. This list of core beliefs is an intentionally brief list, offered with an understanding of freedom in which less essential matters are left to the conscience of our church leadership and our members. The less essentials are important because we embrace the whole Word of God; but we also recognize there may be different interpretations and applications. These are set forth here to provide an agreed theological foundation for the life, ministry, and mission of 970 Church. **1 Corinthians 1:10**

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." — Augustine of Hippo

About God

We believe that the one and only true God is the creator, ruler, and sustainer of all things. He exists as three co-equal and co-eternal persons in perfect unity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each of whom possesses all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personhood. **Genesis 1:1-2**; **Deuteronomy 6:4**; **Isaiah 43:10-13**; **Matthew 28:19**; **Luke 24:49**; **1 Corinthians 8:5-6**; **1 Peter 1:2**

About Jesus

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all humanity by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He rose bodily from the grave, was seen by many and ascended into heaven where he intercedes for his people and rules as Lord of all creation. Jesus will come again to earth, personally and visibly, to fulfill history and the eternal plan of God. **Isaiah 9:6**; **Isaiah 53:1-12**; **Matthew 1:22-23**; **John 1:5**; **Acts 1:3**; **1:9-11**; **4:10-12**; **Luke 24:36-48**; **Romans 1:3-4**; **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**; **Philippians 2:5-11**; **Colossians 1:13-20**; **Titus 2:13-14**; **Hebrews 4:14-15**; **Revelation 22:20**

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About the Holy Spirit

The result of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a maturing life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ. He enlightens the mind of sinners, awakens in them recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them. At the point of salvation, He indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and uniquely empowers each believer with spiritual gifts for the strengthening of the Body and the proclamation of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit provides each Christian with the power to live in a manner pleasing to God, to understand spiritual truth, and to serve as ambassadors for Christ in our world. **John 14:16-17**, **16:7-13**; **Acts 1:8**; **2:1-4**; **Romans 12:6-8**; **1 Corinthians 2:12-16**, **6:19-20**, **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**; **2 Corinthians 3:16-18**; **Galatians 5:16-25**; **Ephesians 1:13-14**, **4:11-13**

About the Bible

The Bible is the source that shapes our understanding of God, existence, and man. We are convinced that it is the inspired message to humanity and provides us with a clear path toward a relationship with Him. We believe that Scripture in its entirety originated with God and was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through chosen men. Scripture both speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full, and final authority on matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God. **Deuteronomy 6:6-9**; **Psalms 19:7-11**; **2 Timothy 3:15-17**; **Hebrews 4:12**; **1 Peter 1:23-25**

About Salvation

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scriptures is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, humanity defied God, choosing to go their independent way, and thus were alienated from God and suffered the corruption of their nature, rendering them unable to please God. The fall took place at the beginning of human history; therefore, all individuals since are sinners, are suffering these consequences and are in need of the saving grace of God. The salvation of humanity is completely a work of God's free grace and not the result, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness, and must be personally appropriated by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation results in a person becoming a new creation and being continually transformed into the image of Christ. **Luke 24:46**

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[L](#), [47](#)[L](#); [John 3:16](#)[L](#); [Romans 5:12-21](#)[L](#), [10:13-15](#)[L](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)[L](#); [Ephesians 3:8-9](#)[L](#); [Colossians 1:13-14](#)[L](#); [Titus 2:11](#)[L](#), [3:5-7](#)[L](#)

About The Church

The church is composed of all persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, are united together in faith and fellowship. The church is expressed in many unique and diverse ways through local congregations as it fulfills its five primary purposes: to worship God, to experience community with each other, to engage in the process of spiritual growth, to equip each other for service, and to reach the world through mission. [Matthew 16:18](#)[L](#), [Matthew 28:16-19](#)[L](#); [Acts 2:42-47](#)[L](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#)[L](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#)[L](#); [Ephesians 2:19-22](#)[L](#), [4:3-4](#)[L](#), [11-16](#)[L](#); [Hebrews 10:25](#)[L](#)

About Eternity

Created to exist forever, each person's death consummates his or her eternal destiny. Upon Christ's return, the dead will be raised together with those who are alive to face the judgment of God. He or she will either consciously exist in Hell—eternally separated from God by sin, or, in the new Heaven and new earth—eternally in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. [John 3:16](#)[L](#); [Romans 6:23](#)[L](#); [2 Corinthians 5:6-10](#)[L](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)[L](#); [Hebrews 9:27](#)[L](#); [1 John 2:25](#)[L](#); [5:11-13](#)[L](#); [Revelation 20:15](#)[L](#); [Revelation 21:1-8](#)[L](#)

As the church, we participate in living illustrations of God's covenant with us through two symbolic acts (ordinances):

Water Baptism

Baptism by immersion is a public profession of faith in Christ. It is symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is a declaration to the world that we have died to sin and have been raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. [Matthew 3:13-17](#)[L](#); [28:19-20](#)[L](#); [Luke 3:21-22](#)[L](#); [Acts 8:36-39](#)[L](#); [16:31-34](#)[L](#); [Romans 6:1-4](#)[L](#)

Communion

Communion – The Communion consists of two elements: the bread and the cup. These elements are symbolic of the body and blood of Christ. Communion is a memorial of Christ's sufferings on the cross and a celebration of our salvation. [Luke 22:14-20](#)[L](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23-34](#)[L](#)

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970 Church is affiliated with the Rocky Mountain Ministry Network of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. For a complete listing of our doctrinal statements, click the following link **[Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths](#)**.

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970 CORE VALUES

Core values are declarations of what we believe is critical to us as a church achieving our mission. It's the things that we'd "go to the mat for". The Statement of Faith, Mission Statement and the Purpose Statement address the fellowship as a whole. The Core Values are more focused on the individuals of the fellowship and particularly the leadership.

We also can't simply declare everything as important, because if we do that, automatically, nothing is important. We cannot focus on everything. Core values are similar to the warning bumps along the sides of the road. They are a reminder of when we get out of bounds, and therefore help keep us on track. Another word picture is that core values are like the banks of a river. They don't impede the flow (of life and ministry) but they do guide it in a definite direction.

INTIMACY WITH GOD IS THE POWER SOURCE FOR PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION, GROWTH & MINISTRY

We believe that God desires an intimate relationship with every believer through the person of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual disciplines help us achieve intimacy with Him, evidenced by the fruitfulness of our lives. Prayer must be the underpinning of every decision, every action, and every dream. Prayer is the key that opens the door to God's wisdom and guidance and it is prayer that releases the power of the Spirit in our lives. (**John 15:1-17**, **Ephesians 6:18**, **Luke 18:1**, **Acts 4:31**, **James 5:16**, **Matthew 6:6**, **Mark 1:35**, **Luke 5:16** & **6:12**)

The Tough Questions:

Do I spend time with God, listen for God's voice and obey when He speaks? Is my time spent in communion with God a priority in my everyday life? Do my actions reflect my faith in God hearing and answering my prayers? Do I take everything to God in prayer?

DEVOTION, AUTHENTICITY, INTEGRITY AND EXCELLENCE ARE CORNERSTONES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that devotion, authenticity, integrity, and excellence should permeate every area of personal and church life including every relationship, beginning with God and extending to others and ourselves. (**2 Corinthians 3:18**, **Philippians 3:21**, **Proverbs 11:3**, **Matthew 22:38-39**)

The Tough Questions:

Am I devoted to God and motivated by brotherly love? Am I honest with God, others and myself? Do I pursue excellence in my personal, public and ministry life?

BIBLICAL TRUTH IS OUR FIRST AND FINAL AUTHORITY

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We believe that God has spoken to us through the Scriptures. The Bible is without flaw and it is our ultimate authority. (**2 Timothy 3:16**^L, **2 Peter 1:20-21**^L)

The Tough Questions:

Am I a student of the Scripture and is there any teaching of Scripture that I am knowingly disobeying?

PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD AND THEREFORE MATTER TO US

We believe that people are the object of God's affections, and that He has asked His church to carry His message of love and hope into an unbelieving world. Meeting people's needs should be more important than maintaining programs. (**Ezekiel 18:32**^L, **Matthew 18:14**^L, Luke 15 (the "lost" parables), **2 Corinthians 5:14-20**^L, **2 Peter 3:9**^L)

The Tough Question:

Who of God's children (saved and lost) am I caring for (body, mind and spirit)?

THE CHURCH SHOULD BE CULTURALLY RELEVANT IN ORDER TO CONNECT WITH THE SPIRITUALLY UNCOMMITTED

We believe our role is to create environments that are conducive to the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people. While our style, tools, and presentation may change with time or target, the truth we seek to share is constant and timeless. (**Colossians 4:5**^L, **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**^L, **1 Chronicles 12:32**^L, **Acts 17:22-34**^L)

The Tough Questions:

Am I a student of human nature and our culture, able to articulate what the people around me sing, dream and cry about?

SPIRITUAL GROWTH HAPPENS BEST IN AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

We believe in the power of love, acceptance and forgiveness. Relationships of mutual, voluntary submission between believers forge accountability, foster care, and fulfill our sense of belonging. (**John 13:34-35**^L, **Acts 2:42-47**^L, **Hebrews 10:24-25**^L)

The Tough Questions:

Who has my complete trust, and can speak truths that I may not want to hear? Who am I investing in? Who do I stand alongside to love and support?

COMMITTED TO TEAMWORK & SERVICE

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It is imperative to keep in one mind and one accord. Though we are uniquely gifted and experienced we realize that only by working together can we fulfill our God given mission. Serving others with a humble heart is our duty and expression of gratitude to God. We believe that each believer is responsible for exercising his or her gifts in coordinated, strategic unity with other members of the body. (**Philippians 2:5-11**^L, **Ephesians 4:1-7**^L & **11-16**^L, **Psalms 133:1**^L, **1 Peter 2:4-9**^L)

The Tough Questions:

What is at the center of my attitudes and passions? Does pride rule in my service? Can I identify my spiritual gifts and show how God's unique calling is expressed in my life and ministry?

THE NEXT GENERATION IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE

We celebrate God's gift of the family, and we are dedicated to a ministry of discipleship, training and prevention rather than crisis intervention to prepare our children for today and the future. We purpose to model in words, deeds, priorities and passions the fullness of a life surrendered to Christ and a life of devotion to God. Sensitivity to our spiritual legacy shapes current plans and ministries. (**Mark 10:13-16**^L, **Proverbs 22:6**^L, **Psalms 101:2**^L, **Joshua 24:15b**^L)

The Tough Questions:

Am I purposefully investing in (my) children to draw them into a personal relationship with Christ? What elements of my life are not good examples for children that look to me? What is my spiritual legacy?

THE GREAT COMMISSION IS THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH BELIEVER

The responsibility of every believer is to get so close to God that our hearts beat with His passions. But we must also remember that passion is like water in a leaky bucket that needs constant attention and mending. We need regular, strategic, relational contact with those far from God to help us see the lost with Christ's eyes and heart. (**Matthew 28:18-20**^L, **John 15:5**^L, **Acts 10:36-43**^L)

The Tough Questions:

Am I sharing my faith, my hope, and my trust in Christ with those in my circles of family, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances? What am I doing to promote the Gospel and take it to those who have never heard? Am I inviting people to our church, our events, and our small groups?

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THE HISTORY OF 970 CHURCH

THE HISTORY OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

The Assemblies of God (AG), officially the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, is a group of over 140 autonomous but loosely associated national groupings of churches which together form the world's largest Pentecostal denomination. With over 397,000 ministers and outstations in over 256 countries and territories serving approximately 69.1 million adherents] worldwide, it is the fourth largest international Christian group of denominations and the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world.

As an international fellowship, the member denominations are entirely independent and autonomous; however, they are united by shared beliefs and history. The Assemblies originated from the Azusa Street Revival of the early 20th century. This revival led to the founding of the Assemblies of God in the United States in 1914. Through foreign missionary work and establishing relationships with other Pentecostal churches, the Assemblies of God expanded into a worldwide movement. It was not until 1988, however, that the world fellowship was formed. As a Pentecostal fellowship, the Assemblies of God believes in the Pentecostal distinctive of baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

BELIEFS

The doctrinal position of the Assemblies of God is framed in a classical Pentecostal and an evangelical context. The AG is Trinitarian and holds the Bible as divinely inspired and the infallible authoritative rule of faith and conduct. Baptism by immersion is practiced as an ordinance instituted by Christ for those who have been saved. Baptism is understood as an outward sign of an inward change, the change from being dead to sin to being alive in Christ. As an ordinance, Communion is also practiced. The AG believe that the elements that are partaken are symbols expressing the sharing of the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth; a memorial of His suffering and death; and a prophecy of His second coming. The Assemblies of God also places a strong emphasis on the fulfillment of the Great Commission and believes that this is the calling of the church.

As classical Pentecostals, the Assemblies of God believes all Christians are entitled to and should seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The AG teaches that this experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of salvation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers the believer for Christian life and service. The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues "as the Spirit gives utterance" (Acts 2:4). It also believes in the present-day use of other spiritual gifts and in divine healing.

While the World AG Fellowship has a statement of faith which outlines the basic beliefs which unify the various branches of the movement, each national AG denomination formulates its own doctrinal statements.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

The General Council of the Assemblies of God (USA), one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States, was organized in 1914 by a broad coalition of ministers who desired to work together to fulfill common objectives, such as sending missionaries and providing fellowship and accountability. Formed in the midst of the emerging worldwide Pentecostal revival, the Assemblies of God quickly took root in other countries and formed indigenous national organizations. The Assemblies of God (USA) is a constituent member of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship – one of the largest Pentecostal fellowships in the world.

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Throughout the latter half of the 19th century in the United States, Protestants from various backgrounds began to ask themselves why their churches did not seem to exhibit the same vibrant, faith-filled life as those in the New Testament. Many of these believers joined evangelical or Holiness churches, engaged in ardent prayer and personal sacrifice, and earnestly sought God. It was in this context that people began experiencing biblical spiritual gifts.

Pentecostals pioneers were hungry for authentic Christianity, and they looked to previous spiritual outpourings, such as the First Great Awakening (1730s-40s) and Second Great Awakening (1800s-30s), for inspiration and instruction. They identified themselves in the tradition of reformers and revivalists such as Martin Luther, John Wesley, and Dwight L. Moody.

THE PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL

One of the focal points of the emerging Pentecostal movement was known as the Azusa Street revival (1906-09). It was an unlikely location for an event that would change the face of Christianity. In the summer of 1906, revival erupted in the newly-formed congregation meeting at the small, run-down Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. Critics attacked the congregation because its mild-mannered African-American Holiness preacher, William J. Seymour, preached racial reconciliation and the restoration of biblical spiritual gifts. The revival soon became a local sensation, then attracted thousands of curiosity seekers and pilgrims from around the world.

Seymour had been a student of Charles Parham, who provided the doctrinal framework for the young Pentecostal movement. Parham's identification in scripture of speaking in tongues as the "Bible evidence" (later called the "initial evidence") of Spirit baptism became a defining mark of the emerging Pentecostal movement. After students at his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, began speaking in tongues at a prayer meeting on January 1, 1901, Parham, through his Apostolic Faith Movement, had some success in promoting the restoration of the gift of tongues. While the Apostolic Faith Movement was largely confined to the south central United States, the revival at Azusa Street catapulted Pentecostalism before a worldwide audience.

FORMATION OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

As the revival rapidly spread, many Pentecostals recognized the need for greater organization and accountability. The founding fathers and mothers of the Assemblies of God met in Hot Springs, Arkansas on April 2-12, 1914 to promote unity and doctrinal stability, establish legal standing, coordinate the mission enterprise, and establish a ministerial training school. These founders constituted the first General Council and elected two officers: Eudorus N. Bell as chairman (title later changed to general superintendent) and J. Roswell Flower as secretary, as well as the first executive presbytery.

The approximately 300 delegates to the first General Council represented a variety of independent churches and networks of churches, including the "Association of Christian Assemblies" in Indiana and the "Church of God in Christ and in Unity with the Apostolic Faith Movement" from Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas.

Almost immediately, leaders were faced with a doctrinal dispute – whether to abandon traditional Trinitarian theology in favor of a modal monarchian view of the godhead (also called the "New Issue" or Oneness theology). In 1916 the General Council approved a Statement of Fundamental Truths, which affirmed Trinitarian orthodoxy.

From the beginning, evangelism and missions have been central to the identity of the Assemblies of God and have resulted in a continuing growth at home and abroad. At its centennial in 2014, the Assemblies of God claimed a constituency in the United States of 3,146,741 adherents; 12,849 churches; and 36,884 ministers. The General

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Council supported 2,847 foreign missionaries and associates working with the broader World Assemblies of God Fellowship, whose adherents numbered more than 67 million.

The aggressive missions programs of the church are designed to establish self-supporting and self-propagating national church bodies in every country. Ministers and leaders are trained in 2,378 foreign Bible schools and extension programs. The Assemblies of God has 17 endorsed Bible colleges, universities, and a seminary in the United States.

The National Office of the Assemblies of God is located in Springfield, Missouri. The National Office includes an administration building, the Gospel Publishing House, and the International Distribution Center. The Gospel Publishing House, the printing arm of the church, ships out more than 6 tons of gospel literature each day.