

TRINITY
CENTRAL

MEMBERSHIP

MAKING GOD CENTRAL TO OUR LIVES AND OUR WORLD





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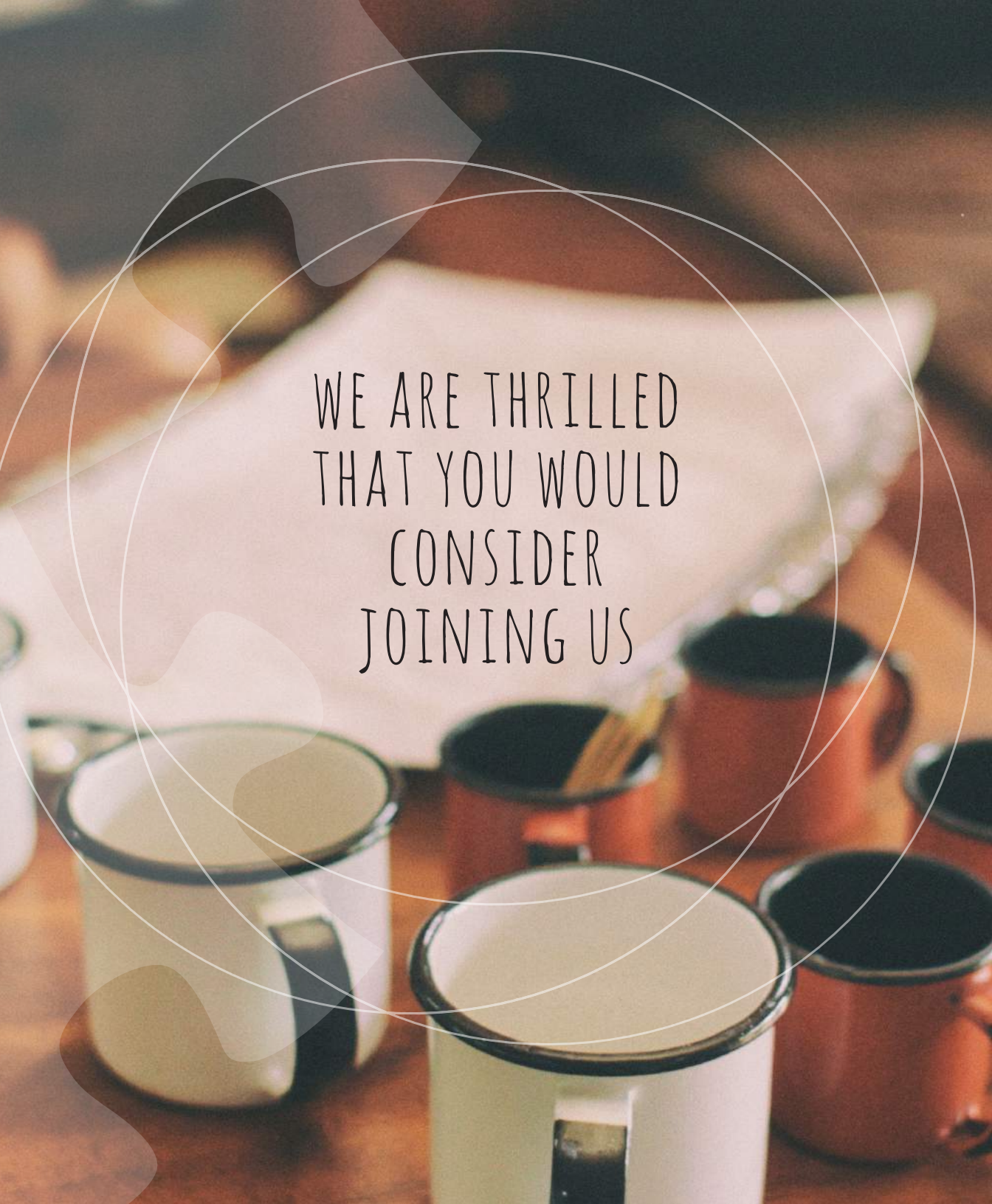
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WE ARE THRILLED
THAT YOU WOULD
CONSIDER
JOINING US



DEAR FRIENDS

Welcome to “*Joining Trinity Central*” – a place where we look at who Trinity Central is and help you decide if this is the church for you.

There are many wonderful churches in our city and we are thrilled that you would consider joining us. Our passion is to see Jesus’ kingdom expanding and we know that it will take many churches to see that happen. We also know that each church has its own personality – its own way of doing things.

We hope that this time together will help you understand how we do things and what we’re about.

Please feel free to ask as many questions as you have. We look forward to getting to know you better!

For Jesus and His mission,
Rhys, Sam, James and Sam

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN 'JOINING' A CHURCH?

Well, because we think the church is the most important family in all of history!


And we think that life only really makes complete sense in the context of God's Global Church, expressed through local churches...

Think we're exaggerating? We're not!

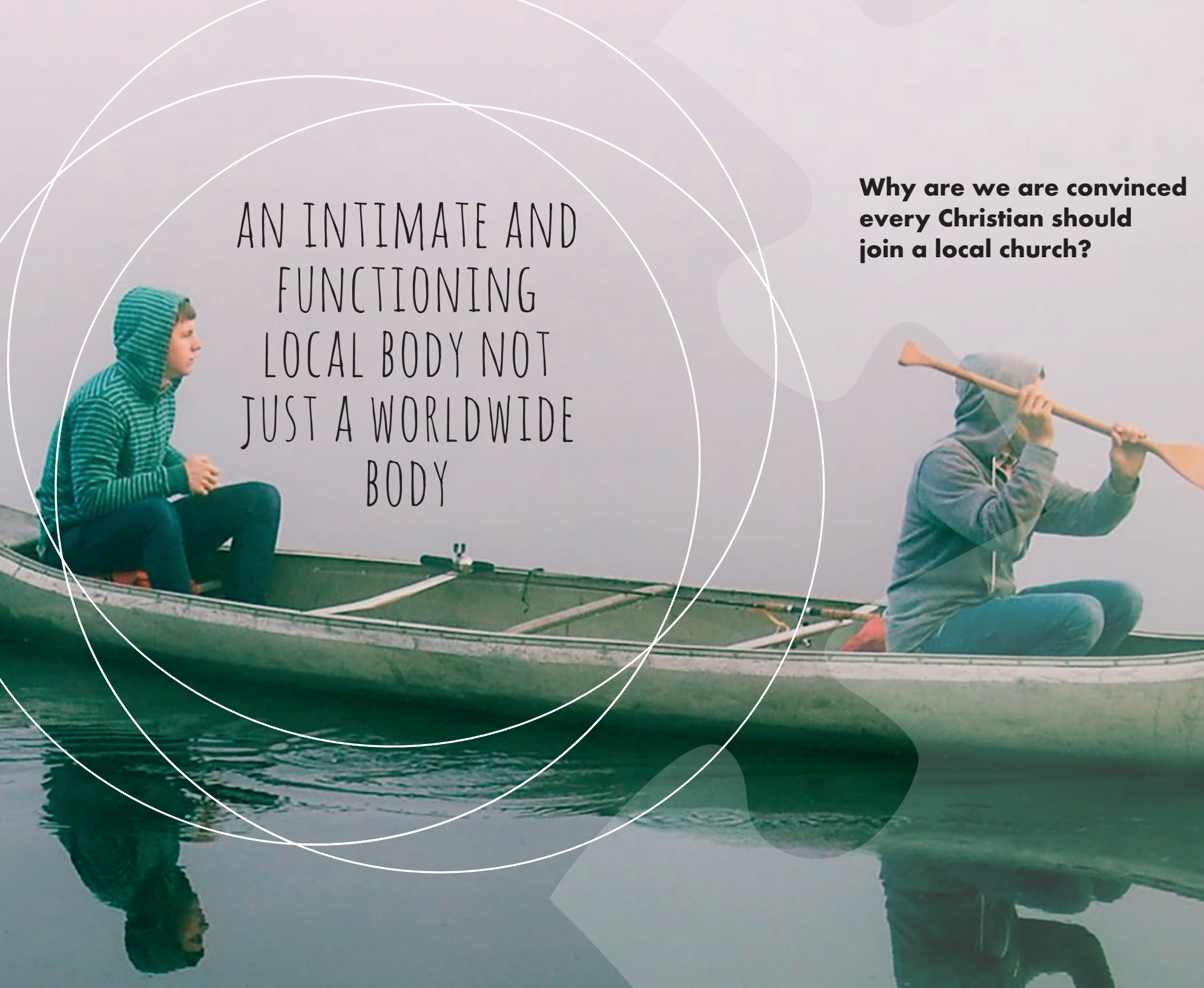
As Phil Moore says in *Straight to the Heart of Acts*: **When Jesus told them to 'go and make disciples of all nations' Paul and Barnabas planted local churches. Whichever way you look at it, that's got to make a difference to the way you invest your life. They didn't simply work for large numbers of conversions. They didn't simply establish a collection of Christian ministries. They didn't even form a network of high quality Christian meetings. They were satisfied with nothing less than planting vibrant and self-supporting churches like the ones in Jerusalem and Antioch.**

The Church (with a big C) consists of every born again follower of Jesus in every era and every nation. But it is expressed through local churches (small c). God's plan, ever since the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, has been for every believer to be meaningfully added to a local church and become a functioning part of His body (*Acts 2:41 & 47; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4*).

Terry Virgo, the founder of Newfrontiers, the network of churches of which Trinity Central is a part, writes in *The Spirit Filled Church*: **Individuals who have never experienced the joy and delight of belonging to a loving and vital Christian body have missed one of the thrills of the Christian life. Mere 'church-going' was never in God's plan for you. He wants you very closely knit with a group of dear friends with whom you can share your life**



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AN INTIMATE AND
FUNCTIONING
LOCAL BODY NOT
JUST A WORLDWIDE
BODY

Why are we are convinced every Christian should join a local church?

Here are some Biblical reasons:

The New Testament's structure: The epistles are written to local churches on the assumption that all believers would be joined to local churches.

It is described in the Bible:

"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number...and the Lord added to their number daily" (Acts 2:41&47.)

It is implied in the Bible: The descriptions of life amongst the early believers imply an up-close-and-personal local church community (e.g. Acts 2-4). Furthermore, when writing to the church in Corinth, Paul describes the church using the 'body' as a metaphor – referring to an intimate and functioning local body not just a worldwide body.

New Testament language of leadership and followership: The Bible cautions church leaders that they will be held to account for how they lead and followers are similarly instructed to obey their leaders (1 Cor 3; Heb 13:7&17). This obviously presupposes a situation where you know who is leading and who is following!

New Testament discipline: Paul instructed his churches that in cases of ongoing unrepentance they should finally resort to putting people out of the church. This indicates that these unrepentant people were in or joined to the church.

Now, before we go any further, let's give you a sense of who this local church known as Trinity Central is.

WHY ARE WE CALLED 'TRINITY CENTRAL'?

*Because we dream of God – the Holy Trinity
– being central to everything: our lives and our world.*

That's our purpose statement as a church:
**making God central in our lives and
in our world.**

There are many things in this world that compete to be at the centre of our lives: relationships, work, money, pleasure, even religion. But when we build our life around these things and make them our focus it leads to confusion, discouragement, and dissatisfaction. We believe that true transformation comes in our lives as God becomes central: we were created by God and for God, and in making God the centre of our life we find joy and purpose.

TRINITY CENTRAL IN OUR LIVES

Each of us has been adopted into God's family by a loving Father, who has saved us through Jesus, our and Lord. We now can enjoy a deep, intimate and life transforming relationship with the Father.

Now we are new creations in Jesus, and this radically changes our identity and the way we live. Jesus is the source of our lives, the Rock upon which our lives are built, and our hope for eternal life.

The Holy Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead, empowers us to live for God in all areas of our lives. This is an on-going process in which our lives are transformed through our growing relationship with God

TRINITY CENTRAL IN OUR WORLD

Jesus catches us up in His mission to go into all the world and proclaim the message of the Father's love, in the power of the Spirit.

This begins in **our church life**, where this new relationship with God shapes our worship, our preaching, and the family we're becoming. We delight in the Father's love, the Son's sacrifice and the Spirit's intimacy: they are the source of our worship, the foundation of our message, and the love which facilitates our unity together.

It goes on to impact **our city** through preaching the Gospel, caring for the poor, healing the sick. Through us the Kingdom advances, bringing salvation and hope to many.

Ultimately, Jesus' mission takes us to **the nations**, where churches will be planted so that more people will encounter God and make Him central in their lives.

WHERE DOES TRINITY CENTRAL FIT?

Let's start with a bit of the history of Newfrontiers - the family of churches we belong to. There is a fuller version of the story on our website, which we encourage you to read.

Rediscovering New Testament community

In the early 1970s, Terry Virgo began to help a number of house churches in southern England rediscover a genuine New Testament community – something that looked a little more like the church in Acts 2:42-47. The number of house churches grew, and each month about a thousand people began to gather at Hove Town Hall for celebration and teaching. From time to time Terry would gather the leaders of these churches for times of prayer and instruction.

On one occasion as they gathered for prayer one of the leaders had a prophecy, seeing the group as a herd of elephants that would break through the jungle and make a path where there was no path, moving in to “new frontiers”. This prophecy led to the churches beginning to form into one family, known as New Frontiers International, later becoming Newfrontiers. As the number of churches grew, churches in other nations began to join the movement.

During this season, provoked by the New Testament model of planting churches served by apostolic ministry, there came an important shift in course from adopting existing churches to planting new ones.

Training programmes, outreach teams, multiplied leaders and pioneer church planters all followed, and today there are hundreds of Newfrontiers churches around the world many with congregations of several hundreds and some beyond a thousand.

Newfrontiers going forward

In 2011 Newfrontiers transformed. Terry and his team released twenty recognized leaders, serving all over the world, to serve the churches as apostles. These faithful leaders were released to take responsibility for the ‘sphere’ of service which God had already given them. This has resulted in multiplied church planting, training programs, and gospel expansion into new areas.

Each of these apostolic leaders is free to develop his own strategies, training programs, and gospel advance, while remaining in loving, prayerful fellowship with one another.

ChristCentral Churches

One of those recognized apostolic leaders is Jeremy Simpkins. Jeremy and his wife, Ann, are based in Manchester, UK, from where Jeremy leads the ChristCentral Churches apostolic team, serving churches in many places including the UK, Canada, Scandinavia, Tanzania and Zambia.

THE EARLY DAYS OF TRINITY CENTRAL

In 2010 God spoke to Rhys and Sara Scott about planting a church in Vancouver, giving them a vision to see another Jesus-magnifying community established here.

At the time they were living in London, UK, where they had been involved in planting a church. Over the following nine months they gathered a team and, with the help of ChristCentral church in Fredericton, moved to Vancouver in September 2011. Initially they gathered people in their home, eating and praying together.

Six months later those gathering could no longer fit into the Scotts' home, and they began meeting at the Roundhouse Community Centre in Yaletown. During the week people gathered in Foundations groups, discussing Terry Virgo's *The Spirit Filled Church* and thinking through what it would mean to establish a New Testament community in Vancouver.

As Trinity Central grew, people were added locally and team members began to arrive from the UK and Eastern Canada, the rooms at the Roundhouse could no longer contain us. In October 2012, after receiving a prophetic word about "the train moving to a new station", Trinity Central moved downtown to the SFU Wosk Centre.


Together with Jeremy and Ann Simpkins, and Joe, Gary and Kevin from ChristCentral Fredericton, Rhys and Sara began to work with a leadership team.

In October 2012 Trinity Central launched its first Alpha course, led by Sam and Kath Wade, at a cafe called Scieue in Yaletown. Alpha became a key component of Trinity Central's mission to reach people who don't know Jesus. It was with great rejoicing that we saw the first people coming to faith in Jesus.

By early in 2014 the church was outgrowing the Wosk Centre and with God's help we found a new home back in Yaletown at the Vancity Theatre.

Gathering at Camp Sunrise on the Sunshine Coast we launched "Thirst" - a weekend of worship, teaching and fun, that is helping us to develop an apostolic vision for church planting.

In October 2014 the first eldership team was appointed and, with much celebration, we moved from church plant to church!



WE SAW THE FIRST PEOPLE COMING TO FAITH IN JESUS.

PROPHETIC VISION

*As we have become established as a church
God has spoken many prophetic promises over us.
These words have shaped our identity and mission.*

Barney Coombes, leader of Salt and Light Ministries, writes: **A genuine prophetic vision has tremendous power: it touches us in the depths of our being and gnaws away at our insides; it focuses our attention; it produces singleness of purpose; it aligns the saints; it harnesses untapped resources; it obliterates festering aggravations; it motivates people to action.**

We live with prophetic promises which inspire us towards all God has in store for us.

We know we cannot accomplish these promises in our own strength, neither do we think that because God has spoken it will automatically come to pass. We understand that the promises of God are inherited through faith, patience, prayer and hard work.

We pray for these promises to be fulfilled, and work hard towards them. They are impossibly out of our reach, and yet with God all things are possible!

There are four particular prophetic promises which we live with as a church family. We'll summarize them here but you can find full versions at trinitycentral.org in transcript format.



God's Spirit pouring out in Vancouver

During a leaders' conference before the planting of Trinity Central, while praying for the plant into Vancouver, a church leader felt God speak very powerfully that:

As surely as the snow melts, and the water runs down the side of the mountains and into the sea, I will pour out my Spirit on Vancouver in the coming days...

Jesus' crown

Our friend Rob Horn was visiting from the UK in December 2015, He brought a prophetic word to us during a Sunday meeting. In the picture he saw the tower blocks of downtown Vancouver at night, lit brightly by the lights in their windows. As he looked he saw the tower blocks forming into the shape of a crown, a crown fit for Jesus Christ to wear. This crown was made up of jewels. The jewels were the people who live in the tower blocks and they are part of God's glory.

Rob prophesied to us about walking the streets of Vancouver, understanding that we walk through the city in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus wants to use us to impact the lives of many in this city, that they may become like jewels in His crown.

This prophetic promise motivates us as church to reach our city with the good news of Jesus' love for the people of Vancouver, knowing that God intends to rescue many!

Superstructure over Vancouver

At our Thirst Weekend in 2015 Jeremy Simpkins had a picture in which he saw the blueprints of a massive structure superimposed over a map of the Lower Mainland. This superstructure had massive, deep foundations. Jeremy reminded us not to despise the day of small beginnings, for God always starts small (like using a baby in a manger to save the nations from sin). Jeremy said what he will start small but has multiplication in its DNA.

This superstructure was supported by pillars in different neighbourhoods: North Vancouver, Kits, Yaletown, out near the universities, in Richmond and Surrey and Burnaby. Each pillar was a different expression of Trinity Central because God is wanting to reach our entire region.

This promise has become key to our strategic thinking: we want to see a church which spans Greater Vancouver but which is rooted into different neighbourhoods. With each step of the way we are asking God to reveal where we should build the next pillar.

Valleys, railway lines, fault line and bridges

Jeremy Simpkins brought another prophetic word to us in the summer of 2012. In this word He felt God speaking to us about church planting, and he saw four avenues God would use to plant churches:

- 1. Up the many valleys of B.C. into the interior and the North;**
- 2. Along the transcontinental railway line which connects the major cities of Canada together;**

3. Down the fault line of the west coast into great American cities like Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Francisco; and

4. Bridges from Asia which had brought people and trade to Vancouver, now being used for church planting going back across those bridges into the great Asian cities.

This promise guides and motivates our ambitions for church planting. We are trusting God that He will enable us to plant new church communities in city after city for the sake of the Gospel.

These four great promises belong to every member of the Trinity Central family – they are not just for the original group who planted the church, or for the leaders. God has given us these promises! Their fulfilment is on us owning them together and working them out together.

THESE FOUR GREAT PROMISES
BELONG TO EVERY MEMBER OF
THE TRINITY CENTRAL FAMILY

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

*Okay, so we have a big vision!
But how do we achieve it together?*

We feel God has given us three strategic goals that will help us achieve the vision He has given us. As strategic goals they will stay before us, and quite likely never change!

They will help us work out what we should do and when we should do it. They will help us channel our energy and resources, and stay faithful to what God has put in our hearts.

So what are the goals? We're glad you asked!

1. Building an apostolic base church in Vancouver with a presence across the Lower Mainland

We want to build a church family which is a centre for worship, community, discipleship and Kingdom advance in our city, extending God's glory throughout Vancouver and the Lower Mainland and sending people to the nations.

2. A movement of church plants working as partners in Canada, the United States and Asia

God has given us promises about planting churches into cities across Canada, the US and into Asia. We must train leaders, send out church planting teams, and resource these plants with apostolic ministry. All of this will be in partnership with ChristCentral Churches, Newfrontiers and likely others.

3. Resource development to serve Trinity Central and other churches

God has called us to develop resources that will serve us as a local church and have value beyond us for the churches we're partnering with. These resources might be in the form of materials, songs and music, training and other courses, and even people who will be resources to us and other churches.

We dream of seeing lives transformed. We dream of a city impacted. We dream of churches planted and nations reached. We dream of the Kingdom of God advancing.

In order to see that happen we need the Holy Spirit's empowering to:

- SEEK THE LOST
- CARE FOR THE POOR
- SET THE OPPRESSED FREE
- HEAL THE SICK
- LIVE OUT OUR FAITH IN PRACTICAL WAYS IN OUR CULTURE AND SOCIETY
- TRAIN LEADERS
- PLANT CHURCHES



HOW DO WE DO THINGS IN TRINITY CENTRAL?

Talking about values is always challenging. Why? Because it's one thing to think you value something, and it's a completely different thing to live those values out!

Values shape how we do what we dream of doing.

We are a family on Jesus' mission together - making God central to our lives and our world. What exactly do we mean by that phrase?



The Father has adopted us as children into His household – the church is God's family!

Jesus, when told that his mother and brothers were looking for Him, made it clear that those who obey His Father are His true mothers and brothers and sisters (*Matthew 12:46-50*).

Healthy families love each other, are committed to one another through thick and thin, and enjoy celebrating together. Healthy families work through conflict in such a way that it brings them closer together. They share resources and care for one another in the different seasons of life.

They're made up of people who are very different yet have a common bond that transcends their differences.

Relationship is therefore a high value for us. Our relationship with God flows into relationship with each other.

God's family is made up of single people, married people, and families. Here, in His church, single and married people hang out, the lonely find family, and all are welcomed, accepted and loved.

As God's family, we are called to love each other - relationships may start with coffee at the end of a meeting but we don't want them to end there! Rather, we are intentionally "going deep" with each other, seeking to love and serve each other in the nitty-gritty of everyday life.



ON JESUS' MISSION...

Jesus stepped out of Heaven and came to earth to seek and save lost people. He came to introduce us to His Father, and to advance His Kingdom. Jesus triumphed over sin and death at the Cross, but He assigned to His people the mission of proclaiming the good news of His Kingdom to the world. He told His disciples that He would make them into “fishers of men” and then he commissioned them to “go into all the world and make disciples of all nations...”

They preached the Gospel, cared for the poor, healed the sick, set the oppressed free, lived out their faith in their communities, saw new leaders raised up and sent them out to plant new churches. What a vibrant, dynamic adventure it was!

By planting churches they formed new communities into which new believers could be born again and flourish, “cities on a hill” which displayed the goodness of God to the world around them.

It’s no different today. God is still building faith-filled, God-centred communities which are doing these same things

We love how Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, describes the local church in his book, *Courageous Leadership*:

There is nothing like the local church when it’s working right. Its beauty is indescribable. Its power breathtaking. Its potential unlimited. It comforts the grieving and heals the broken in the context of community. It builds bridges to seekers and offers truth to the confused. It provides resources for those in need and opens its arms to the forgotten, the downtrodden, the disillusioned. It breaks the chains of addictions, frees the oppressed, and offers belonging to the marginalized of this world. Whatever the capacity for human suffering, the church has a greater capacity for healing and wholeness.

We firmly believe that all churches should be reproducing churches. This was the New Testament model and it is still the most effective strategy for discipleship, evangelism, and advancing the Kingdom of God.



TOGETHER...

If Trinity Central is to be such a faith-filled, city-transforming, reproducing church we will need every member playing their part, recognizing that we each have a unique and necessary part to play.

OUR FIVE CORE VALUES

Here are the values we aspire to.

We want these things to characterize Trinity Central's life together and align us in our mission together. We are:

Friends first

Church is family, and family is not professional – it is friendship. We want to be friends together, celebrating vulnerability and intimacy one with another.

Jesus called his disciples 'friends', and drew them into friendship with one another. We're following that pattern!

Grace-centred

Eph 2:8-10, Acts 11:23, Col 1:5-6, Rom 5:2, 2 Cor 9:8

In Christ everything we are and do is flavoured with God's grace. By His grace we have been released from the power and penalty of sin, and have come into a new life, defined by the freedom, joy and acceptance we find in relationship with God.

This grace which we have received from God impacts every area of our lives. Knowing that we are loved and cherished by God frees us and enables us to love and cherish others, forgiving one another and extending grace as we have received it. We walk in vulnerability with each other because we have no pretences to keep up! The Gospel thus shapes not only our initial experience of salvation, but the full experience of our lives.

Shaped by the Word and the Spirit

Scripture shapes our thinking and the Spirit empowers our action. We don't focus on one to the exclusion of the other as both are critical to living life and fulfilling the mission.

Scripture is authoritative for all of life, and we gladly submit ourselves to it in preaching, personal study and discussion. We love expository preaching: we typically preach through large chunks of the Bible, explaining it in context and applying it to our lives, because we know that the Bible is God's special communication to His people. God speaks to us as we faithfully preach and obey His word!

The Holy Spirit teaches us truth, guides us in God's purposes and empowers us for everyday life and the mission Jesus has called us into. The Spirit enables


our worship, fuels our prayer, and is the source of our unity. The Holy Spirit leads our church into new mission opportunities, and sets our focus in different seasons.

Team oriented

Everything that is worth doing is worth doing together. By working in team we share the load, complement each other, accomplish more, and go further. Every person in our church family brings unique gifts and perspective and has a role to play in the mission. Like a bicycle, we are more together than we are apart.

Pretty much everything we do as a church is done in teams: church leadership, worship, LifeGroups, Kids' Church and other ministries. When we start new things we do so by building team around a leader.

We love and champion team as opposed to one-man or one-woman ministries!



Seeking simplicity and excellence

In all we do we try to keep it simple and do it well. That will look different from season to season in church life. Simplicity means keeping things streamlined, and focuses us on the 'why'. Often it's difficult to keep things simple – complexity creeps in without our noticing – but simplicity makes our pace lighter and our structures clear.

Excellence is that attitude which always seeks to grow and improve, to serve better! Excellence is not perfectionism – it isn't driven or pressured. Excellence places value on 'how' we do things as well as 'why'. If we can't do it well, we likely won't do it yet!

We'd prefer to do a few things well than lots of things poorly, with the burnout and attrition that often accompanies that!

WORKING IT OUT IN THE DAY TO DAY...

Lets get practical.

How does this actually work out in every day life?

We prioritize worship and prayer

It won't take you long to discover that we place a high emphasis on worship and prayer in Trinity Central. These two things orient us toward God. Everything else we do is temporary: pastoral ministry, discipleship, evangelism, and caring for the poor. None of these will exist in eternity. When God makes all things new there will be no need or suffering, no broken people to pastor, no lost people to share the love of Jesus with, no poor people to care for!

As a church family we gather to worship in our Sunday celebrations and in our LifeGroups. We pray in our LifeGroups and we gather together to pray regularly as a church. We make a big deal of these things! They are the centre of our communion with God as a church family. We participate together in body ministry as we worship and pray - expecting that the Holy Spirit will give spiritual gifts to each of us to strengthen, encourage and comfort the rest.

Our gathering is to God first. Everything else in church life flows from our relationship with God. It is well said that God doesn't send missionaries, He sends His children on His mission!

We're building small to build big

LifeGroups are the building blocks of our church.

It's impossible for anyone in the church to have meaningful friendship with everyone else. The truth is we just can't have day-to-day relationship with a large number of people. That's why LifeGroups are so important to us.

LifeGroups are how we do life together and keep God central in Trinity Central. LifeGroups provide us with the C-D-E of church life: *Community - Discipleship - Evangelism*

Community

In LifeGroups we intentionally build relationship together, seeking to grow in vulnerability and transparency so that we genuinely love and serve one another. We start our LifeGroup meetings with a meal as life isn't about an agenda, it's about relationships!

Discipleship

Growth happens through intentionally journeying together, worshiping, growing in the use of spiritual gifts, and applying the Sunday message to our lives on a weekly basis. The focus of LifeGroups is not Bible study per se – the mark of a true disciple is not Bible knowledge but Bible obedience! We want to put what we're learning into practice, so that we are not only hearers of the Word, but doers of the word.

Evangelism

Jesus told us to pray for workers for the harvest because the harvest is ready. He taught us to spread the seed of the Kingdom message generously. In LifeGroups we encourage one another to live this out intentionally. We pray for one another, celebrate each other's stories, and encourage one another to expect God to touch others through us.

Did you notice the word that came up in all three of those points? "*Intentionally*". The life of a disciple is one of *intentionality*.

In LifeGroups we are intentional about living for Jesus together, in our walking with God, in our personal lives, in our relationships, and among those who don't know Jesus.

Much of Life Group happens outside of the LifeGroup meeting - over the dining room table, around the coffee table, in the mountains, on the beach... People meet to pray together, to work out together, to connect in other ways. LifeGroup is about living life together in a way that glorifies Jesus!

LifeGroups also function as our primary place for leadership development. LifeGroup leaders gather a core team around them with whom they share the responsibility of leading the LifeGroup. The core team members help the LifeGroup leaders to lead well by sharing the load, and in turn, they are prepared for leadership themselves by learning and doing. In due course members of the core team will start new LifeGroups.

LifeGroups are the building block of the Trinity Central family, and we encourage every person who seeks to be a member of Trinity Central to join one and do life together.

We are generous

God is unbelievably generous in His love and provision toward us. In return, He teaches us to respond with faith-inspired generosity. We discipline ourselves to give regularly and self-sacrificially, and the result of this is joy in our lives and confidence in God's provision for us.

Jesus tells us to store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. The implication is that we can invest our earthly resources into eternity, choosing to use them to advance the Kingdom. What a reward we will receive!

In a similar way, in 2 Cor 9, the apostle Paul reminds us to think of giving as investing, like a farmer does with his field. The farmer reaps according to what he has sown - as we sow into God's church for the purpose of Kingdom advance we do three things:

we honour God and reflect His generosity, **we do damage** to our tendency toward selfishness and materialism, and **we multiply** our resources into eternity through the lives of people.

We don't give out of obligation but, as those who have received much, we see giving as a privilege and a partnership with God for building His church and advancing His Kingdom.

We believe that our local church should be the primary source of our regular giving. We encourage people to give over and above that to individuals in need and projects that make a difference in our world.



LEADERSHIP IN TRINITY CENTRAL

*The New Testament church is a unique organism
– there is nothing else like it in all creation!*

Scripture describes it as God's family, Jesus' body, and the Temple in which God dwells on earth.

The New Testament also teaches us that God has given leaders who are suitable to lead this unique people. Jesus' teachings turn worldly concepts of leadership on their head - he taught us that Godly leadership is really all about serving.

In the Old Testament God gave three types of leaders to His people: prophets, priests and kings.

The kings exercised rulership and leadership among the people, the priests represented the people before God, and the prophets spoke the Word of the Lord to the people. In the New Testament Jesus is shown

to be the ultimate Prophet, Priest and King. He is God speaking, He is God making reconciliation for us, and He is King of Kings.

As a result of salvation the Church is Jesus' body on earth: a prophetic, priestly, kingly people. The apostle Peter calls us a Royal Priesthood, a people declaring the praises of God among the nations (1 Peter 2:9). This sums up our prophetic, priestly, kingly mandate as the church.

The apostles speak of two groups of leaders that God gives to lead and serve each local church:

Elders

1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Acts 20:17-35, 1 Tim 5:17-22

Peter and Paul's epistles, and the examples of the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch, show us that each local church is led by a team of male elders, one of which leads the team. Elders are servant leaders who feed, guide, guard and govern the church, exercising oversight of the church and shepherding the people. It is the elders' responsibility to lead the church into Christ's mission, caring for the people and raising up and releasing leaders across the church. They shape the culture of the church, and model a life in Christ for the church to follow.

Deacons

1 Tim 3:8-13

While elders carry the greatest weight of responsibility for the church, much of the leading is done by others. The Greek word used for these others is deacon, which simply means 'servant'. As the church grows we keep releasing more men and women to lead others. This might be leading ministry teams, a LifeGroup, a children's group – pretty much any role that involves influencing and serving others in the life of the church.

While the local church is led by elders and deacons working together to serve the congregation, they don't do so in isolation. Paul teaches that Jesus has given gifts to His church in the form of people who are able to equip others to fulfil the work of ministry – and these leaders we colloquially refer to as "Ephesians 4 ministries", as they are found in that chapter of the Bible.

Ephesians 4 Ministries

Eph 4:7-16,

Paul tells us that God has given particular gifts to the church to equip it and bring it to maturity. Those gifts are people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

We invite and welcome these gifts into the church on a regular basis in order to equip and strengthen us.

Apostles: God gives apostles to the church to catch it up in His global mission, to found new churches, raise up and appoint leaders, and to strengthen existing churches. Apostles work relationally, connecting people and churches together. They invest in people, and model a life on global mission with Jesus for the rest of the church. They lay a foundation of Biblical teaching into the church in order that the church might understand its identity and purpose.

Prophets: Prophets inspire the church by pointing them to God, bringing God's eternal nature and purposes into the 'now'. They remind us of God's heart towards us, towards the world and towards the poor. They equip the church to hear from God, and to live out the prophetic identity of the church in the world.

Evangelists: Evangelists inspire the church to seek and save lost people: connecting us with God's passion to reach those who don't yet know Him. They equip the church to be effective in reaching out, and lead the charge to see the church fully functioning in loving lost people.

Pastors: God gives pastors to the church to equip the church to care for one another. "Pastor" is the Latin word for "shepherd", and Ephesians 4 pastors will demonstrate God's love for the church, inspiring the church to love one another and fostering healthy community. They'll equip the church to care for one another, and lead the charge for healthy relationships, marriages, singles, parenting... and the list goes on. Pastors help the church to be 'people people'.





Training up leaders

Leaders are critical to the growth, development and health of God's church. The Bible not only points us to God, but tells the story of many of the leaders God has used. Raising up and releasing leaders is critical to the advance of the Kingdom, and therefore really important to us. In particular, we're looking for 'FATSO' leaders!

Faithful: leaders often need to persevere. We need consistent leaders who are in it for the long term, and who do what they say they will do!

Available: you may be incredibly gifted, but if you're not available (in terms both of time and of attitude) God can't use you! Leaders need to be available to the people they lead and the role they carry.

Teachable: the best leaders are always seeking to learn and grow. Teachability is an attitude, and without it you cannot grow and often act as an obstacle to the people following you.

Servant-Hearted: Godly leaders serve God, His people and His purposes. They aren't in it for their own status! They give and they serve because they're passionate about carrying out the church's mission.

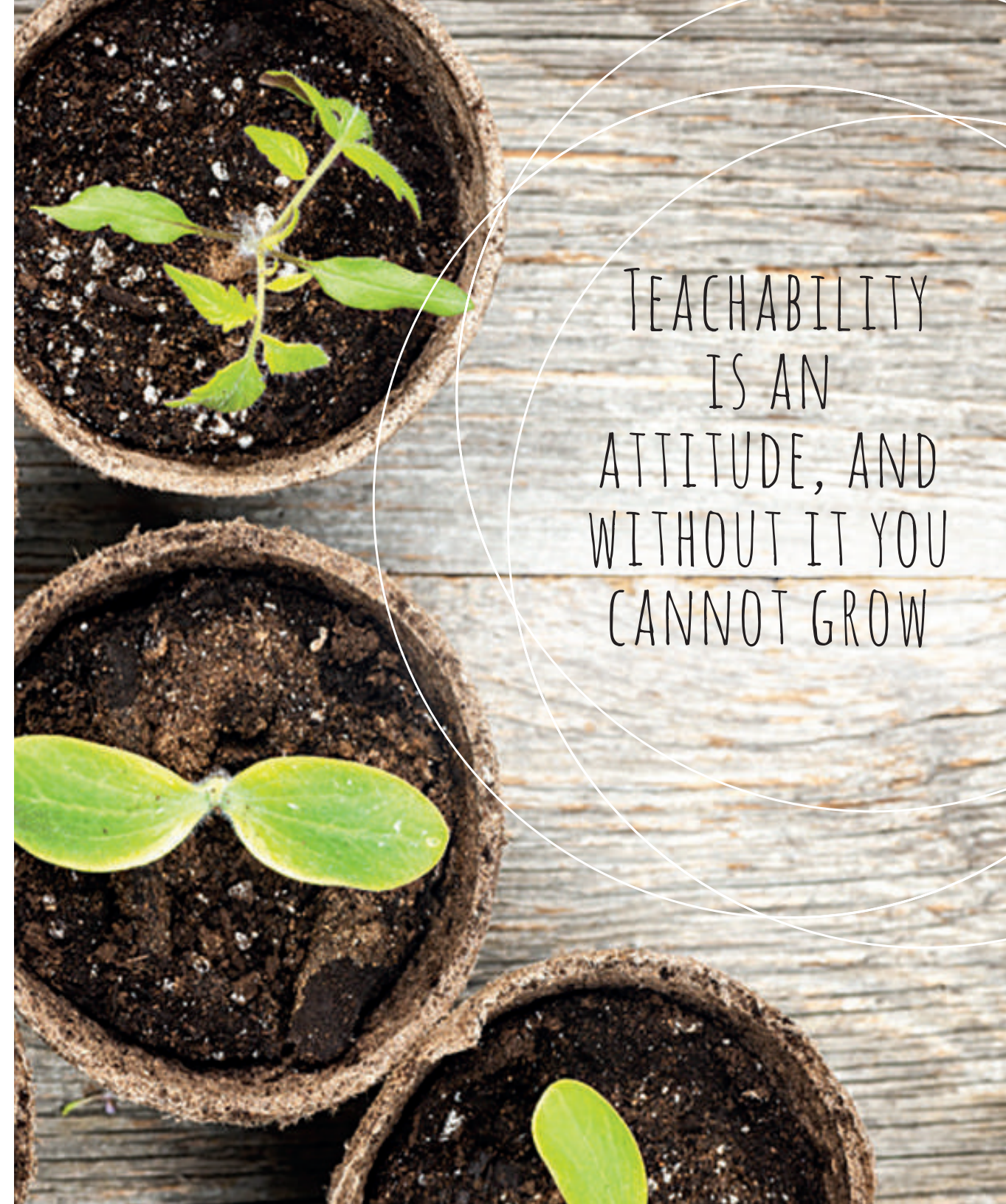
Obstetric: Godly leaders are always looking to birth life in others and to release them. They don't build to themselves, rather they create space for those they lead to serve and grow into all that God has made them to be. They are multipliers of ministry and life!

We train leaders through our LifeGroups and the School of Leadership.

We believe God wants to grow many and release them into leadership in Trinity Central over the years to come. That includes you!

Teachers: The church needs to know who God is, what salvation means, her identity as God's people, and what God's intentions for this life and eternity are. God gives teachers to the church to inspire us to believe and trust God, and equip the church to grow in understanding God and His big picture for creation. God reveals Himself to us through the Bible, and Ephesians 4 teachers help us to grow in healthy understanding of the Bible, and to be able to teach others about the Christian faith.

As we grow we will receive Ephesians 4 gifts into the church to help us grow healthily, and to inspire us to become all that Jesus desires. We will increasingly recognize and release those that God gifts in these ways to serve us and other churches.



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BECOMING PART OF TRINITY CENTRAL

What does a great church member look like?

So, let's talk about membership and you! As you're thinking about becoming part of the Trinity Central family, what attitudes should you cultivate, and what actions should you take? Here are some characteristics of great church members:

1. Building relationship with God

Membership in God's family starts with God. We want to encourage each and every member of the Trinity Central family to invest in a rich, vibrant and healthy relationship with God through worship, prayer, reading the Bible, and participating in church life.

All too often this vital part of our Christian life is neglected, and our 'being with God' dwindles as our 'doing for God' increases. Great church members cultivate healthy life rhythms and spiritual disciplines that nourish and sustain their walk with God.

2. Prioritizing friendship

Building and sustaining healthy relationships is a high priority for a great church member. They build vibrant and transparent relationships. They invest time in people. They put others first, choosing the good of others over their own preferences.

Hospitality is a high value for a great church member, because building a church family is not just about attending meetings, giving and serving. It's about meals with friends, welcoming new people, BBQs on the beach, hikes in the mountains...

Hospitality fosters authentic friendship rather than the superficial relationships we build if we only see each other in meetings.

3. 'Fully in' on the mission

In a consumer society where everyone wants to know "what's in it for me?" the church is a refreshing demonstration of commitment to something greater than "me, myself and I". We're not here to get, we're here to give! And God responds by joyfully meeting our needs.

Great church members understand and own the mission that God calls us to as a church, and they try to help us move forward in that together. They're not concerned about 'my ministry', they're focused on 'our mission'.

A great church member is clear in their commitment to the people of the church and the mission of the church. That means that they live intentionally towards both.

They participate in the life of the church, giving themselves to corporate prayer, to worshipping together on a Sunday, and fully engaging in a LifeGroup. They serve in the life of the church – recognizing that the body needs all parts functioning to work well.

A sports team relies on every member to play their part or they'll lose the game! It isn't really that different in church life – when healthy members work together the fruitfulness is striking. When some don't play their part it falls to others to carry weight they shouldn't have to carry. This hurts the church and the individuals involved and it endangers the mission.

4. Working for unity

The unity of the church is unique. It begins in Jesus Himself – through whom we are all saved into One Body. The Spirit Himself is our bond of peace – empowering love in the church in order to make our radical unity possible. In almost every letter in the New Testament unity is a prominent theme. Great church members take unity very seriously!

Handling Conflict:

Where there are people there will be conflict! Conflict, when handled well, helps forge strong, long lasting relationships. On the other hand, when conflict is handled poorly or avoided it destroys relationships. Unaddressed conflict is like a cancer growing in the body of the church.

Matthew 18:15-20 provides us with a Biblical pattern for dealing with conflict in the church family. Here are three simple things that great church members do to handle conflict well:

Determine to resolve the conflict quickly before it grows. Great church members don't let conflict lie unresolved.

Resolve the conflict directly with those involved. Much unnecessary damage is done when people speak to everyone except the person involved! Great church members only involve others who can help resolve the conflict, and only when appropriate.

Move forward once the conflict is resolved. Great church members leave it in the past! True forgiveness means that you don't keep raising the issue.

Gossip: Great church members know that gossip is one of the most damaging sins in the church - it wounds individuals and hurts the Body of Christ. We all want Trinity Central to be a safe place for people, not a place where you have to protect yourself from the words of others. In order for that to be the case gossip has to be ruthlessly eradicated! Great church members refuse to participate in the sin of gossip, and shut it down wherever they see it.

Theological differences: As we all work hard to understand God's revelation of Himself and His purposes in the Bible, we may disagree about what the Bible says. That's not a bad thing! God encourages us that iron sharpens iron: genuinely seeking truth is a good thing. However, argumentativeness breaks down the church, and so great members resist the urge!

In Trinity Central there are things that we're "closed handed" about – beliefs that you need to agree with to be part of our church family – and things that we're "open handed" about – issues where we can agree to disagree.

We're 'closed handed' about major doctrines, like the identity of Jesus as God and Saviour of all, the nature of salvation through repentance, faith and baptism and other key truths you can read about later in this booklet. We're 'open handed' about lots of more minor things – you're free to disagree with us.

5. Praying for and submitting to their leaders

Great members understand that they are joining the leaders. Think about it: the leaders of a church actually define the church. Trinity Central is a group of people who have voluntarily chosen to follow the leaders of the church, and it is important that each member has a clear sense of calling to follow the leaders.

Leaders work hard. They generally do it for the benefit of those they serve as a labour of love. The apostle Paul teaches us to imitate our leaders, to honour our leaders, and to pray for our leaders. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us to obey our leaders. 'Obey' is not a popular word in our culture! It doesn't mean blind obedience, but it does mean that, in matters of church life, we'd encourage you to listen, submit to and support those whom God has set as leaders in His church.

However, if you do disagree on something we ask that you do not oppose the elders' teaching in and among the church. This is divisive. Rather, engage with the elders and seek to work through to a healthy place of agreement (or disagreeing in good heart!). We may find that you have a better handle on it and come to see it the same way as you do – we're all learning!

Great members understand that this should never be a 'gritting your teeth' kind of submission, but a joyful, supportive submission, accompanied by prayer, which encourages leaders to serve all the more joyfully and graciously among the church.

Leaders don't always get it right – mistakes affect people as they learn the skills of leadership. Occasionally that means that people get hurt by leaders. While we'd rather it didn't ever happen, we know it will from time to time. When it does happen we want to work it through in a healthy manner.

Great members, who have been hurt by a leader, talk with them about it, and if necessary, involve one of the elders. Great members understand that you can walk through these things in such a way as to grow together in strength and love.

6. Serving others

Healthy church members focus their energy on that which helps and serves others, rather than themselves. They don't put their preferences at the top of the list, rather they ask: "*What will best help those who don't know Jesus, and what will best help my brothers and sisters in the church?*"

Great members are participants, not consumers. Healthy church members are solution finders, not problem creators!

Membership in a church is not at all like membership in a social club or other organization. Most organizations exist to serve their members. The church of Christ is a completely different community – one in which members seek to serve non-members. At Trinity Central, we take seriously that we are a church not for ourselves but for others!

7. Giving

Healthy church members give of their resources to enable the life and advance of the church. They recognize that God has put resources in their hands to make the advance of His Kingdom possible through the church. They love to be generous, choosing to sow liberally into the church.

Great members not only give of the first-fruits (in other words, giving doesn't come at the end of their budget), they set faith goals for their giving, seeking to grow in the grace of giving. Giving is both a joy, and a discipline they cultivate.

Every person working out their part of the mission – that's the crux of what membership is. Paul likens the church to a human body, where all the parts play different roles, but together they make it possible for the body to function effectively. For us to be effective for God together will require many people doing what they're gifted to do, serving God and each other.

We hope you will join us as a member of this family. We hope you will step onto the team and play the part that God has gifted you to play, strengthening and serving the church, and helping us move forward in our mission together.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

*Membership is ultimately a heart thing.
It doesn't happen through signing a piece of paper
or making a public declaration of commitment.*

You're a member because you've become part of the family through developing relationships and committing to the people and the mission of the church.

Yet making your commitment clear is an important thing to do. It means you know you belong in the family, and we know you do too!

Acts 2 helps us understand the pre-requisites for membership in Jesus' church:

Peter replied, "**Repent** and be **baptized** for the forgiveness of sins, everyone of you, and you will receive the gift of the **Holy Spirit**... those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3000 were added to their number that day...and they

devoted themselves to fellowship and the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:38-41)

Repent: You need to be born again (if you aren't already).

Baptized: You need to be water baptized soon (if you aren't already).

Receive the Holy Spirit: You need to pursue the baptism of the Holy Spirit (if you haven't already).

Devoted to the leadership, doctrine and people: You should feel comfortable committing to the leaders, the doctrine and the people of Trinity Central.

How do we work that out in Trinity Central?

Baptism

You can't become a member of the Trinity Central church family without first becoming a member of God's worldwide family - through faith, repentance and baptism in water. We believe that baptism is the first step of obedience in living for Jesus, and that baptism is only appropriate once there has been personal expression of repentance and faith.

Thus, before you can become a member in Trinity Central you must have made a personal decision to follow Christ, and been baptized in response to that. We will be more than happy to baptize you!

LifeGroup involvement

Membership in Trinity Central starts with a genuine involvement in church life, primarily expressed through participating in a LifeGroup. You can't be part of the family without actually **being** part of the family!

The Membership Process

As you become involved in a LifeGroup and decide that you want to join the Trinity Central church family we invite you to enter the membership process. That involves:

- Watching the three Membership talks and reading through this booklet. Hopefully, that will give you a good understanding of what it means to be a member in the Trinity Central family!
- A coffee with one of the elders so you can ask any questions, and we can hear your heart regarding becoming part of the family. You'll be invited to sign a membership form.
- A 'Joining the church' Sunday, in which you make a declaration of commitment. We'll celebrate together, and welcome you into the family.





What's the declaration?

The declaration is in four parts:

Doctrinal: I believe that the Bible is God's authoritative Word for all matters of church and personal life, and I will seek to apply the teaching of scripture in every area of my life.

Character: I commit myself to seeking to grow into the likeness of Christ, not through proud self-reliance but through constant fellowship with God, repentance and trust in the Holy Spirit.

Community: I promise to participate in the life and ministry of Trinity Central, committing myself to the mission that Jesus Christ has called us into together. I promise to love this family, serve in church life, and give of the resources which God has entrusted to me.

Accountability: I hold myself accountable to the leadership and to one another to live up to these promises, and I seek to be a biblical peacemaker in my relationships.

Annual renewal of membership

Once a year we have a church family meeting in which we have an opportunity to renew our membership in the church family. This gives an opportunity to express our commitment to one another, and to our mission together. During this meeting we break bread and pray together, and renew our declarations.

This meeting is a requirement for ongoing membership in Trinity Central. If you are unable to attend but want to continue in membership we will need you to write a letter which can be read out at the meeting, explaining your absence and committing to being part of the family. This gives us clarity as to who we are building with and so we can express our loving commitment to one another.

It also means that we don't have a 'membership roll' which includes people who aren't actually participants in church family life.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER?

Although becoming a member of Trinity Central is not a prerequisite for participation in our church family or ministries, it really is the best way to be a genuine part of the church.

We believe that membership in Trinity Central is a privilege and we invite you to consider joining our church family.

If you don't want to become a member we won't hold it against you and we won't pressure you. You're welcome to join us on a Sunday, you're welcome to journey with us as a friend. But we would encourage you to find a church family where you can commit – if not with us, then with one of the other churches in our city.

Commitment matters

Expressing commitment is an important part of genuine participation and belonging – you can't build a family without commitment. And committing yourself to others means that they will likely commit themselves to you.

If you find this difficult it might be worth asking yourself: why don't I want to commit to being fully part of this church family?

Is it because of a previous negative experience? Is it because you are fearful of committing in general? If either of these answers ring true then it would be very good for you to consider talking about it and praying with someone. Not dealing with these things will cause you to miss out on much of what God has in store for you.

“I’m already a member in the Global church...”


One of the primary reservations many people have about joining any church is, *“If I’m already a member of the Body of Christ, why do I need to join a church?”* The fact is that, although all believers are members of the worldwide church, the New Testament shows that this is expressed through commitment to a local church. There are many benefits to belonging to a local church family, including the care of, and the accountability to, spiritual leaders.

Others commit to you


Just as you are making a public commitment to support your fellow members, they have made the same commitment to support you. By formally joining the church, you cease to be an independent Christian and become, instead, part of the family. Your public declaration in joining the church serves as a powerful reminder that you are not ashamed to identify with Christ or his people as you openly demonstrate the reality of the Body of Christ.

Membership opens the way for greater participation

Membership also gives you the right to participate in shaping the ministry of the church and growing in leadership among us. You become part of a stronger, more unified expression of God’s people. While Trinity Central does not require membership before allowing you participate in many of the church’s activities, becoming a member opens you to greater opportunities to use the gifts God has given you.



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CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Discipline is an important part of our lives. Initially our parents discipline us, and as we grow the focus becomes self-discipline.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus involves engaging with spiritual disciplines, and a walk of obedience to Jesus. The Holy Spirit guides us in this walk. In *Hebrews 12* we read that God the Father disciplines all his children - it's a sign of His love for us that He trains us to live in a Godly way by disciplining us. Discipline is applied to train us, not to punish us.

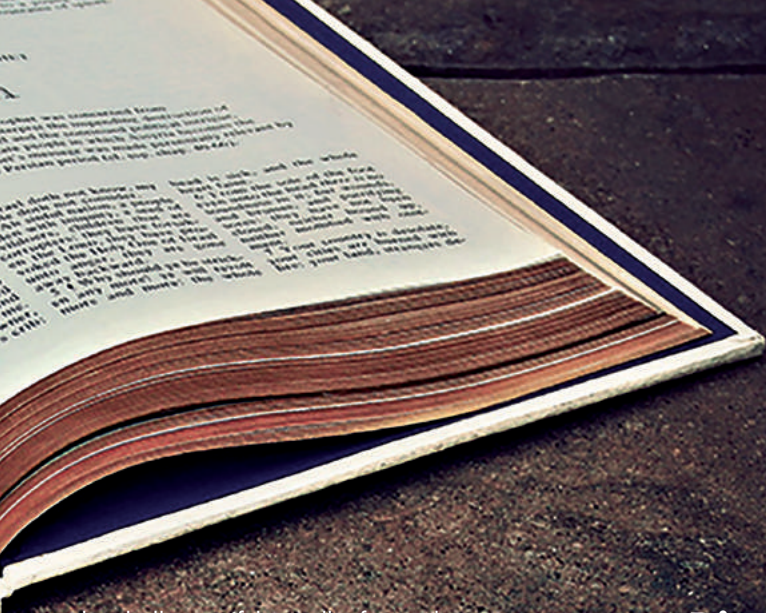
In the same way, there are times when discipline happens in church life. Our accountability with one another is real.

Most of that discipline comes in the form of personal challenge.

For example: a caring friend in the church might gently and wisely question a decision you are making, asking whether you have sought God's guidance in the matter, for they are concerned that you might be making yourself vulnerable to sin and its consequences.

Some discipline comes when we avoid resolving conflict, or we continue in sin.

Jesus teaches an approach for dealing with conflict and sin in *Matthew 18*. When we are sinned against, or notice an issue with a brother or sister in the church family, we are to lovingly and gently challenge that person. If that person refuses to listen we should take someone else with us to bring more weight to



the challenge. If they still refuse to listen to a group challenge, then the matter should be brought to the church, including involving the elders. If there is still no openness to dealing with the sin then we should treat that person as we would treat someone who is not a fellow disciple of Jesus.

In 1 Cor 5 and 1 Cor 15 we find Paul addressing a situation of this nature in the church in Corinth, where a man in the church refuses to repent of his immorality. Paul eventually encourages the church to treat him as someone who doesn't actually know and love Jesus, and is not part of the body.

Leaders and church discipline

Sadly, leaders sometimes sin in ways which disqualify them from continuing to lead. Scripture teaches that they should be disciplined in the context of those they lead, for those they lead will be the most impacted by their failure. For elders who fall into sin scripture requires that they be disciplined in the context of the whole church, for that is the scope of their authority and leadership.

Discipline for the purpose of restoration

Church discipline can be difficult and painful, yet it is clearly directed in scripture. The point of church discipline is restoration, if at all possible. Church discipline should be motivated by a love for the person and concern for God's purity and holiness to be honoured and preserved in the church.

How do I leave this church?

There may come a time for you to leave this church family. Our hope and prayer is that we can do this in a way that glorifies God.

Here are some reasons people have for leaving churches:

"I want to be part of a new church plant."

Wonderful! We really want to plant more churches and know that it will mean that we will have to give away some of our best people to resource these new churches. Our commitment to you is that we will talk it through with you (to make sure you are a good fit for a church plant), resource you as far as we are able, and commission you through prayer. Often this means we will announce to the church that you are leaving us to serve a church plant and then we invite the whole church to pray.

"My job is taking me to a new part of the world."

We will be sad to see you go, but will be happy to pray for you and help you find a new church in your new location. Please let a leader in the church know so we can walk with you in the transition.

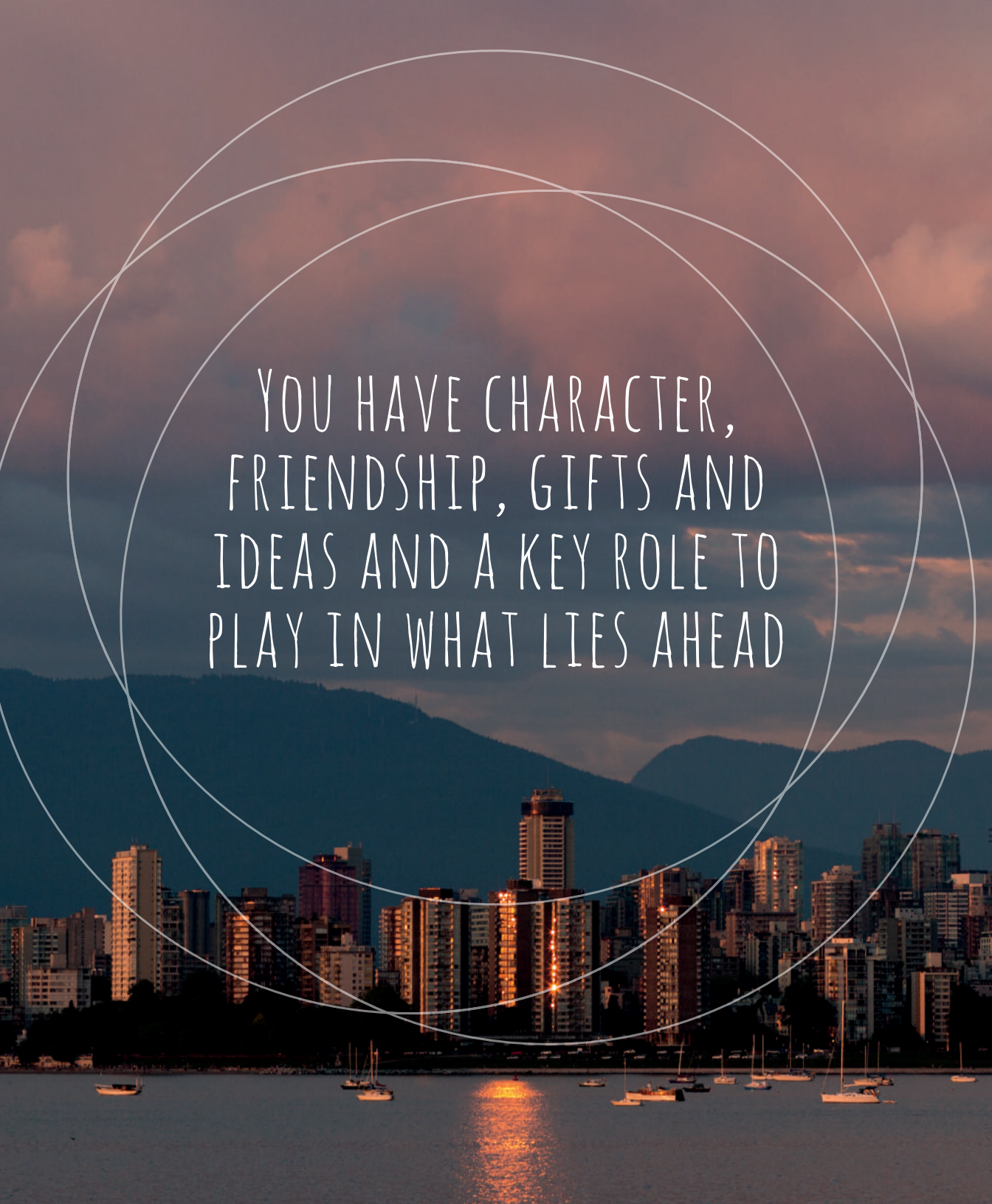
"I think there is another church in this city that is a better fit."

We will bless you as you go. If you're comfortable with talking more about your differences with us we would love to sit down with you and hear you out. As much as we want to be a church for all people, we know that some may feel more comfortable elsewhere. Again, we will pray for you and with you in your transition.

"I have an issue with the church, or with someone in our church family."

We absolutely hate it when people decide to leave the church because of this reason, and would love to sit down with you and speak to you about the issue(s). If it can't be resolved we understand that we may well need to go different ways, but we'd rather have the chance to resolve the issue before you make that call.

We ask that you wouldn't speak ill of the church and/or the person in the church who you have issues with. We promise that we won't speak ill of you. In a day and age where social networks and blogs are so easily accessible and public, we ask that you use discretion in what you say or post. We are committed to doing the same.



YOU HAVE CHARACTER,
FRIENDSHIP, GIFTS AND
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IN CONCLUSION, WE'D LOVE YOU TO JOIN US!

And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel."
(Num. 10:29)

Like Moses, we know that God has called us together and made promises to us. We trust that, as you join with us in this adventure, you too will receive an inheritance as we journey into God's promises, and joy from being part of the family.

You have character, friendship, gifts and ideas and a key role to play in what lies ahead. We'd love to journey with you in sharing God's blessing as we make God central to our lives and our world. We can do more together than apart!



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