

# Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



**Biblical Church membership workshop morning.**

**The background is a picture of a man building a house by fitting stones together**

***[www.calvary-brighton.org.uk](http://www.calvary-brighton.org.uk)***

***[calvary-brighton.sermon.net](http://calvary-brighton.sermon.net)***

# 1. Biblical Overview

**Objection:** there is no such thing as church membership in the New Testament.

- Unnecessary
- useless,
- Legalistic
- Opposed to the main points of Christianity

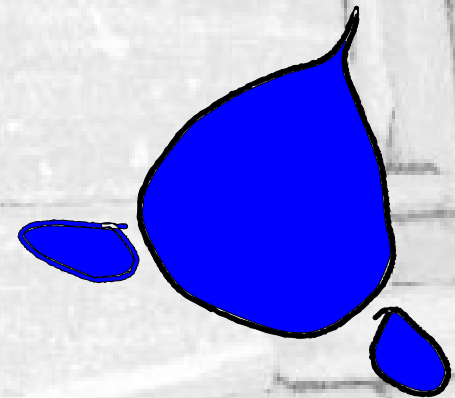
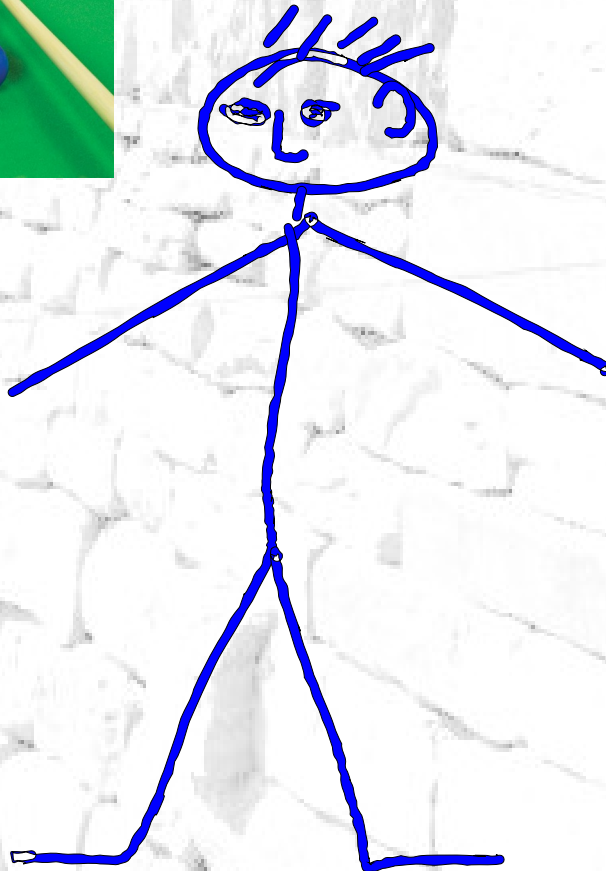
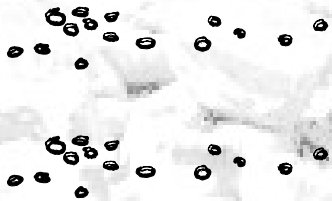
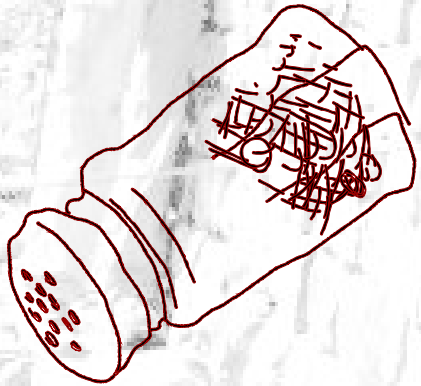
**Answer:** there is no reference or ceremony called "membership" in the N.T.

(likewise no word/title "Trinity"! But it is there throughout the NT)

**BUT** - the ideas that we (=Calvary) mean by Church Membership flood the New testament

# 1. Biblical Overview

It is very very very clear that N.T. Christianity is all about a **functioning community that is ordered from outside this world**



**Christians**

- not like grains of pepper
  - not like snooker balls
  - not even like water droplets
  - but like a body with many part
- = a functioning order community

# 1. Biblical Overview

Fundamental New testament themes - formal church membership is saying "yes" to these (not "no" not "no"/"sometime"/"maybe")

1. Love - John 13:34 - a promise to real people somewhere
2. service - Mark 10:42
3. gifts - Romans 12:1-8
4. interdependence - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 //12-26
5. unity/variety - as above
6. accountability (formal and informal) - Matthew 18:15-18
7. a mission/purpose - 1 Timothy 3:14
8. a shared beginning - Acts 2:38-41
9. a shared meal - 1 Cor 10:20-21

# 1. Biblical Overview

Fundamental New testament themes - church membership is formally (actually) saying "yes" to these (not "no"/"sometime"/"maybe")

A church member is

- NOT a super Christian ... a normal Christian
- young or old
- new or experienced
- overwhelmed by the flood or walking on water
- highly educated or not good at reading
- a doctor, a barrister, a single parent, seeking work, English, Albanian,
- BUT IS someone who says YES to the whole package of following Jesus



2. 40 years or more of history

- subtitle: Calvary DNA

- subtitle: be a church member, but understand whether this is the church  
to be a member of

1896 - meeting for Railway workers - led  
by ladies ... a Mission Hall

Purchase of building - Mrs Gates (died  
1911) superintendent (!)

- missionary ladies

- Christian Endeavour

1914-18 war

1939-45 war

To 1960's and 1970's

- Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, decline,  
Harvest festivals

- Sankeys Sacred songs and solos



## 2. 40 years or more of history

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- subtitle: be a church member, but understand whether this is the church to be a member of

### Pastor Les Hill (came 1964- died 1989)

- Loved the Lord and his Word and his House - including cooking for 20
- Had an open home for international students inc. John Benton
- Learned and taught Reformed grasp of salvation, through considerable opposition
- Reformed = Calvinistic (like 39 articles) = God rules, God saves by his grace, I was lost and dead in sin, to him be the glory
- With AP (Gerald and Howard - then Philip 1979)
- Plurality of elders
- Need for full-time elder (John Cropley)
- Consecutive expository word-ministry





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Pastor Les Hill (came 1964 - died 1989)

Being Evangelical Reformed Christians =???

- Antiquarian? ("thou dost")
- Separatist? (e.g. from Anglicans)
- Modern songs? (e.g. Graham Kendrick)
- Church culture? (e.g. dark suits, hats & silence)
- "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is"  
Hebrews 10:25
- Responsibility of members (not all down to  
"them" and "the Pastor")
- Doctrines of grace and gracious character





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## Recent History

- Les' death, John Cropley departs, Philip Wells as full-time (1989)
- possibility of being "kicked out" by the Railway Mission national
- planning blight - hole in the roof
- meeting in the back hall only
- 7 years of prayer
- Richard Hart "is there a reason why God would want a church [based] in Preston Circus [rather than anywhere else]"



2. 40 years or more of history

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to be a member of



## Recent History

- 7 years of prayer about building
- joining FIEC, SGP
- Richard Hart "is there a reason why God would want a church [based] in Preston Circus [rather than anywhere else]"
- outreach to community - street party, car parking, visiting traders
- new people like Chris and Katy Fry
- growth in work and numbers

2. 40 years or more of history

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## A CHURCH

- evangelical = believes the gospel,  
spoken by God in Bible
- reformed: we preach freely  
offering Christ to all, God saves  
by his grace
- God sets the agenda by his word,  
Christ rules his church by his  
word and Spirit

