

# INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST THE REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## SESSION 5: BELONGING TO HIS COMMUNITY

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### Understanding the Church

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### Summary

Pastor and spiritual theologian Eugene H. Peterson says it well: “No Christian is an only child.”<sup>1</sup> How true! The Christian life should not – indeed it cannot – be lived in isolation; the Christian life is profoundly *communal*. In this part of the Introduction Course, we will focus on the centrality and necessity of the church in the Christian life.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH

“No one has God as his Father who does not have the church as his mother.” Cyprian<sup>2</sup> first said those words 1700 years ago and they have been echoed by Christians ever since.<sup>3</sup> Yet in our day – when there is such a large number of churches, denominations, and parachurch ministries – Cyprian’s words may sound a bit strange. What is the church? Why is the church so important? The more we learn about the church – this mysterious and multifaceted body – the more thankful we can be for our place in it. We can better understand the church, and better preserve a balanced understanding of the church, by looking at it from several perspectives.

**“No one has God as his Father who does not have the church as his mother.”**

—Cyprian

### Organism and Organization

On the one hand, we speak of the church as a living *organism* because it is the people of God, the living body of Christ, the vital fellowship of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The church is a supernatural creation, built upon the life-giving message of the gospel; in the church the gospel is embodied, and through the church the gospel is displayed and proclaimed.

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<sup>1</sup> In *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (InterVarsity, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Cyprian was an influential church father

<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, for example, quoted them frequently

<sup>4</sup> See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 12:12-13

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On the other hand, we speak of the church as an *organization* because it has members, structure, officers, government, and authority.<sup>5</sup> The church is more than an organization, but it is not less. The organization exists to incarnate the organism.

We must keep our balance here. If we lose sight of the church as an organism, we will overly institutionalize the Christian faith and fail to appreciate the church as living, dynamic body. Yet if we lose sight of the church as an organization, we will overly sentimentalize the faith and fail to appreciate the church as a real institution with its own God-ordained government, officers, and discipline.

### Visible and Invisible

Here's another important balance. The *invisible* church is made of all those who have been born anew by the Holy Spirit into union with Christ and who therefore genuinely possess eternal life.<sup>6</sup> This is the church seen in her *ultimate reality* – that is, the church defined in terms of who will be in the church in heaven, spending eternity worshipping their Redeemer.<sup>7</sup>

The *visible* church, on the other hand, is broader being made up of all those who have been baptized and who have not been removed from membership by church authority.<sup>8</sup> This is the church seen as she is *currently expressed* – that is, the church defined in terms of those who are *now* members of the church, whether or not they are truly converted.

The distinction is a helpful one, for we need to remember that merely being on a church membership roll does not make one a Christian! Also, there are those who are genuine believers but who haven't (yet) been baptized and received into official membership. However, we must remember that God takes both perspectives seriously. Remember how the Apostle Peter, on the Day of Pentecost,<sup>9</sup> answered those who asked how to be saved: "Repent and be baptized." The full biblical definition of a Christian is someone who is a member of the church in both senses. Just as in a good marriage there needs to be both sincere heart-felt love and public wedding vows, in the Christian life there needs to be both a passionate faith in Christ and an outward identification with the people of God.

### Local and Universal

The Scriptures often refer to a single local group of Christians, meeting to receive the Word and sacraments, as the church; this teaches us that we are to be involved in *local* churches.<sup>10</sup> There is

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<sup>5</sup> See 1 Timothy 3:1 ff

<sup>6</sup> See John 3:5-7; 1 Peter 2:5

<sup>7</sup> Theologians discuss this *eschatological* dynamic of the church. The term eschatology means more than just the order of "last things" but is a rich description of Christ's consummation of all that He has begun. We as Christians are in this sense "forward-looking" people as we have a certain hope of Christ's return and all that His coming will accomplish.

<sup>8</sup> See Romans 9:6; 1 John 2:19

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2

<sup>10</sup> See Romans 16:4-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19

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a certain *primacy* to the local church; it is in our home churches that we are nurtured, loved, taught, and cared for. The local church (including the smaller groups within the local church) is our primary spiritual health care provider.

However, the Scriptures also regularly refer to all the Christians in the world – and to regional groups of Christians – as the church, teaching us that the church is bigger than just a local gathering of believers. There is even a certain primacy here, as well, for all of us are first *Christians*, not merely members of a certain church.<sup>11</sup> The Bible teaches that the church is to exist in widening concentric circles of accountability and encouragement.<sup>12</sup>

Again, we must maintain the biblical balance. Some people have claimed to be followers of Christ without being a part of a local church; this is clearly contrary to Scripture. Every believer is obligated (and privileged!) to be an active part of, and accountable to, a local fellowship of believers. However, we are also a part of the whole, universal church – what the Nicene Creed calls the “one holy catholic and apostolic church” – and we need to remember and to practice this truth. Ultimately, all Christians – whatever our local church or denomination – are to be united to one another, to listen to one another, to learn from one another, to hold one another accountable, and to love one another in such a way that the world sees our unity. For the whole church, and for our unity, we should pray daily.

**A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**

—Jesus in John 13:34-35

## THE CHURCH AS *WORSHIPPING* COMMUNITY

The chief task of the church is worship – we were redeemed, in the words of the Shorter Catechism, that we might “glorify God and enjoy him forever.” Worship is the central task of the Christian church.<sup>13</sup>

But what *is* worship? Tim Keller defines worship as *seeing the worth of God and giving God what He is worth*. In all Christian traditions – whether formally or informally liturgical (there is always a liturgy, a shape to the service) – these two core elements exist:

1. There is *hearing from* God, seeing anew what He is worth. The Scriptures are read, heard, and proclaimed in a variety of ways. We hear Him as His Word is preached, sung, prayed, shown in the sacraments, and received in the benediction.
2. There is *giving to* God, giving Him what He is worth. We give Him our sins (confession), our substance (offering), our praise (singing, other responses), our needs (prayers of the people). We give Him our problems (completely trusting in Him), our devotion (recognizing and repudiating our idols), our thanks (eschewing self-pity).

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<sup>11</sup> See Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Corinthians 1:2, Acts 9:31

<sup>13</sup> As we have discussed in earlier sessions this is not limited to corporate worship, but also includes personal and family worship too.

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In the words of Jonathan Edwards, worship is setting the “affections” on God. Your affections are not merely your emotions, but your motives, the things that drive you, that you truly treasure. Because we were created for worship, when we do not worship God, we worship other – finite – things; we set our hearts on relationships, careers, money, accomplishments, approval, comfort, power, control. We set our affections on idols, deriving our meaning and sense of self-worth from them. When we worship God we pull our affections off these things and set them on God.

### How Do I Know I’ve Worshipped

You know that you have worshipped when, in the words of the Apostle Paul, the “eyes of your heart” have been enlightened so that you grasp the immensity of God’s love (Ephesians 1:18), or, in the words of theologian Peter Toon, “the mind descends into the heart.” When you’ve worshipped, every part of you has been engaged – mind, will, emotions. Ask yourself, “Has the truth touched my emotions and led to a changed life?” If all three are not organically connected, it is either an intellectual event, an emotional experience, or volitional pressure, but not worship.

### THE CHURCH AS WORSHIPPING *COMMUNITY*

The church is a community – a family in Christ, for we are all, by adoption and grace, sons and daughters of our heavenly Father.

Building authentic relationships is at the center of the Christian life. In fact, God Himself is in His essence Trinitarian existing eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity are in an eternal relationship that teaches us that

*Worship is...*

the quickening of the *conscience* by the holiness of God  
the feeding of the *mind* by the truth of God  
the purging of the *imagination* by the beauty of God  
the opening of the *heart* to the love of God  
the devotion of the *will* to the purpose of God

—Archbishop William Temple

relationships are intrinsic to the structure of reality, and foundational to the universe. There has never been a time when God was not in relationship and the creation He has made to reflect His glory testifies to this all around us.

Of course, like our human families, the family of God isn’t perfect. Eugene Peterson has often commented that the church is equal parts mystery and mess! But this communal structure is part of God’s plan of redeeming the world, and therefore the Christian life cannot and should not be lived in isolation; rather, God calls His adopted children to live in face-to-face relationships in which encouragement, accountability, and friendship are living realities.

### Home Fellowship Groups

A *Home Fellowship Group (HFG)* is a small group of people, meeting in a home for the purpose of developing community and equipping people in the essentials of what we have been talking

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about: worshipping Christ, celebrating His grace together, and radically loving God and the people of Portland, New England, and the World. The groups are a critical component for building community. They provide an opportunity to develop friendships, study the Scriptures, pray, and serve. They are led by trained lay-leaders who will be given on-going support. Our HFGs will have three basic purposes:

1. ***A place for fellowship & friendship.*** The Bible tells us to encourage, serve, rejoice, and weep with, correct, instruct, sing to, build up, accept, and love one another. That's quite a list! There is no better way to put yourself in a position to fulfill these commands than by becoming part of a Home Fellowship Group. Also, these groups are places where newcomers can be welcomed into the fellowship of the church.
2. ***A place to discover Christianity.*** Home Fellowship Groups are also places where people can ask honest questions about the Christian faith. Those who are believers can remind ourselves of the importance of being a “contagious Christian,” sharing the gospel with others. Each HFG will have a vision for developing new leaders and multiplying into more groups.
3. ***A place where gifts are exercised.*** The church is sometimes compared to a football stadium where you find 22 people who desperately need rest and thousands of people who desperately need exercise. HFGs are places where spiritual gifts are discovered and exercised within the group, within the larger church, and in service to the world.

Home Fellowship Groups are the central nervous system of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church. They will be the primary place for pastoral care, assimilation of new members, training and discipleship, leadership development, and communication. Because they are foundational in the life of our church, we hope that the vast majority of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church's members and attendees will be involved in a Home Fellowship Group.

## THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

To be a member of a church is to make a public promise to live according to biblical teachings and to support the mission and ministry of the church. In the Bible, this is called a *covenant*. Biblically speaking, such covenants are the basis for all of society. Marriage and citizenship, for example, are all relationships of accountability.

### The Benefits of Membership

Of course, many of the benefits of a vital church are available to anyone who attends. But there is a rationale for membership.

1. Members have the benefit of *accountability* to the elders, the spiritual leaders. Hebrews 13:17 teaches us to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls.” The command presupposes that you are in a covenant relationship with

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certain leaders. Those who say, “I am accountable only to God” are not only in disobedience to Scripture, they are placing themselves in great spiritual danger.

2. Members have the benefit of church *authority* to shape the ministry of the church. It is members who elect the offices who guide the direction of the church. And only members are eligible to serve as elders and deacons.
3. There are certain other benefits to church membership as well. Only those who are members of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church may have their children baptized into the membership of the Church. And only members may lead in certain church ministries, such as Home Fellowship Groups.

If you decide to be involved with Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church without membership, there will be no pressure to join. *Do not join unless you are ready to be committed.* However, we do believe that church membership is a biblical concept and, if Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church is to be your “home” church, we hope that you will prayerfully consider membership eventually.

### Membership & Accountability

In Presbyterian churches, each local church and each minister is held accountable to the church as a whole – while preserving local autonomy on things such as style and ministry approaches. In the same way, while expression of individual gifts is a priority, each individual church member has a relationship of accountability to the church.

1. **General oversight.** Ministers and elders have the authority to inquire into the general lifestyle of believers, to discipline, encourage, and admonish. In fact, all of us are to encourage one another in our spiritual formation. This general oversight is a privilege for which we should all be thankful.<sup>14</sup>
2. **Judicial discipline.** While ministers and elders cannot bind the conscience of believers beyond the teachings of Scripture, they do have genuine authority to lead the people according to biblical standards. For example, that cannot say, “You must be in a Home Fellowship Group,” but they can say, “You must break off this adulterous affair.” In cases where informal admonition regarding sin does not result in repentance, the stages of formal church discipline begin. This starts with formal admonition, and then can escalate to suspension from the sacraments and to removal from membership in the church (excommunication). Discipline is never merely for some particular sin, but is always for *refusal to repent* over a sin. The goal of church discipline is *always* the complete restoration of the offender and the purity of the Church.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 5

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3. **Radical love for one another.** We are accountable to one another also. We must be truthful with one another and when we see one among us doing something damaging to himself or someone else we must lovingly go to him and help in any way that we can.

One more comment on church discipline and accountability: For many people in our secular society, *accountability* to the church is not only novel, but objectionable. Yet hundreds of thousands of Christians will testify to the benefits of being a part of a community where *people love you enough to be honest with you*. If you have questions about this, please speak with Doug Warren. Remember: One of the great benefits of being a Christian is being a part of the Christian community – knowing that there are fellow believers who love you and are looking out for you.

## MEMBERSHIP & STEWARDSHIP

Supporting the worship and work of the church to the best of your ability is one of the membership vows. Church members do this in a myriad variety of ways, but most fall into two categories – money and time – both commodities that seem to be constantly in short supply!

While stewardship certainly includes much more than money, it does not include less. Here are three basic biblical teachings on the subject of giving to the work of the kingdom.

1. **Giving must be in significant proportions.** The Bible gives three guidelines:
  - The guideline of the *tithe*: In the Old Testament believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor. While the New Testament does not give believers this requirement today, surely we who are blessed more are not encouraged to give less. Thus the tithe (10%) is a kind of *minimum* guideline for giving.
  - The guideline of *sacrifice*: St. Paul says of the Macedonians, “they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability.”<sup>16</sup> That means they gave until it meant a sacrifice in their lifestyle.
  - The guideline of *responsibility*: Christians are to give “according to their ability.”<sup>17</sup> There are seasons of economic life, and we all have economic responsibilities to our families and to our debts. In many cases, good planning is necessary in order gradually to move our giving into biblical proportions while still meeting personal and legal financial obligations.
2. **Giving must be a joyful response to God’s grace.** The Apostle Paul asked for money by saying, “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus

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<sup>16</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:3

<sup>17</sup> Acts 11:29

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Christ, that though He was rich, He became poor, so that through His poverty you might become rich.”<sup>18</sup> What a test! Paul says that the difference between moralists (those who think that God accepts them because of their goodness) and Christians (who know they are sinners saved purely by grace) is that a Christian wants to give as generously as he or she has received. Put starkly, we always give effortlessly to those things that give our life meaning, to our “gods.”

3. ***Giving must be systematic and thoughtful.*** Paul directed the Corinthians to set aside a portion of their wealth each week until he came and received it, in this case for the relief of famine victims in Palestine.<sup>19</sup> Giving “spontaneously” might meet point two above, but it’s rarely up to point one. You need a plan, and the church can help with reminders and directions. Here’s a plan:

- *Evaluate your own heart with regard to money.* What do you most enjoy spending money on? How much of your total income is going to (1) God’s kingdom (your church, other Christian ministries) and (2) to help those in need (outside your family)? How close is it to 10, 20, or 30 percent? Read Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-15. Do you need to adjust your giving in light of biblical values, in terms of eternal investments?
- *Evaluate the use of your “non-liquid” resources.* God has given us much more than just money and we must be faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to us.
- *Do you have a regular plan for giving?* First, decide what percentage of your income you will give to the Lord’s work this year. Then ask yourself, on the one hand, if this is *sacrificial* and, on the other hand, if this is *responsible*. Last, whatever money comes in, set aside the Lord’s portion first, with the understanding that it is His, not yours.
- *Prayerfully distribute the money among Christian causes.* Of course, your church is your primary avenue of spiritual growth, and giving to your home church will be a first priority. But there are other ministries that are worthy of support as well.

**Remember.** There is a correlation between how you steward the material treasure God has entrusted to you and the spiritual treasure He will give you.<sup>20</sup> We give as worship to God for what He has done for us and who He is.

## JOINING CHRIST THE REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Membership in Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church means that you have committed yourself to this family of believers, that you have agreed to participate fully in the life, ministry, and government of our church. Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church belongs to a wider

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:8-9

<sup>19</sup> See 2 Corinthians again

<sup>20</sup> See Luke 16:9-12; 2 Corinthians 9:10-12

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family, that of the Presbyterian Church in America, and members of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church are members of this body as well.

The process of becoming a member of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church looks like this:

1. ***The Membership Seminar.*** This INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST THE REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH seminar is ordinarily the first step, although it in no way obligates you to membership.
2. ***Meeting with the pastor.*** After you have had an opportunity to consider the material presented in the seminar, the pastor would like to meet with you and answer any of your questions and see if you are ready to proceed to a membership interview.
3. ***The Membership Interview.*** Designed to allow our leadership to get to know you better, to hear how you came to be a Christian and what God is doing in your life, and to allow you to ask any questions you might have about the church. The pastor or an elder on the commission will ask you to give assent to the five membership vows.<sup>21</sup> Please make sure you understand these vows thoroughly and can whole-heartedly agree to them.
4. ***Reception.*** Following the interview, the Session will meet to enter new members into the church. Then, at a Sunday worship service, you will be asked to come forward and affirm publicly the membership vows. Those who have not been baptized previously will receive Holy Baptism at that time. Welcome to Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church!

### Membership Commitments

According to the *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, communing members<sup>22</sup> must give their assent to the following five membership vows:

1. ***Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure and without hope except through His sovereign mercy?***
  - It is important to come to grips with the bad news of our depravity because, without understanding this truth, the good news of the gospel is robbed of its glory. It is vital to admit that God's displeasure is justly deserved, that we are *naturally, deliberately, and slavishly* sinful.
2. ***Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the gospel?***
  - Of course, this membership vow presupposes orthodox Christian belief in the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement.

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<sup>21</sup> Members are received in three basic ways: (1) profession of faith, for new believers who have never formally declared their commitment to Christ; (2) transfer, for those coming from other churches; and (3) reaffirmation of faith, for those who cannot (for various reasons) obtain a transfer of membership. Of course, those who have not been baptized will receive Holy Baptism, the rite of entrance into Christ's church.

<sup>22</sup> Communing members are those who have made a public profession of faith and been admitted to Holy Communion. The baptized children of believers are non-communing members of the church.

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- A key word here is *alone*. It is vital to realize that justification comes through faith *plus nothing*. In no way do we contribute to our salvation.
  - Also key is the word *resting*, conveying the idea that we have repented not only of our sins, but of our righteousness – of our attempts to earn God’s favor through good works. By affirming this vow you are publicly confessing that you are trusting *only* in Jesus Christ – in His sacrificial death and His glorious resurrection – for your acceptance by God the Father.
3. ***Do you resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ?***
- The issue is not whether you are *struggling* with a particular sin; we all struggle with sin, and we look to the church community to help us in our struggles. The issue is whether or not you hold biblical convictions on these issues and are fighting against known sin.
  - The phrase “in humble reliance on the Holy Spirit” implies that you are using the means of grace, practicing basic spiritual disciplines in order to grow spiritually.
  - In our culture there is a great deal of confusion about what it means to live the Christian life, especially in the area of sexuality. Therefore, we think it is important to let people know up front what we understand the Bible to teach in this area.
    - We believe that sex is a gift from God by which we declare to a spouse that we belong and are committed exclusively to him or her. On that basis we believe that sex outside of heterosexual marriage is wrong. *If you cannot honestly give your assent to this position, you need to talk with Doug Warren about this before pursuing membership in Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.*
    - For married couples, we believe that the marriage covenant is permanent and that divorce is permissible only after desertion or a fundamental breaking of that covenant by one partner by adultery. This is a significant area of pain and difficulty for many and we want to deal gently and truthfully with it. *If you have been married and divorced, please speak to Doug Warren about your history in this area.*
  - The problem of “living in sin” is not limited to sexual sin. If you are in a pattern of habitual disobedience such as drug or alcohol abuse, spouse or child abuse, or anything else that demonstrates an unwillingness or inability to repent, we must address these issues before you can seriously consider membership.
4. ***Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?***
- This includes assent to the church’s general vision and approach to ministry including our commitment to the centrality of worship, to missions and mercy ministry, and to serving one another as a community.
  - This promise includes the understanding that Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church is a Presbyterian church and that, while you may or may not hold Presbyterian views yourself, you are knowingly and willingly joining a church which holds these convictions and you agree to submit yourself and your family to these doctrines in the practice of the church.
  - This also includes the responsibility of supporting the church with your time and money, being a good steward of that which God has entrusted to you, and being involved in the ministries of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
  - A basic five-part membership expectation would involve a principled commitment to . . .

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- Worshipping Christ personally, as a family, and corporately. This includes making every attempt to attend and participate in Sunday morning worship services as a top priority in your life.
- Celebrating His grace through building your joyous knowledge in genuine spiritual growth—more and more appropriating the gospel in your life and (if applicable) in your family.
- Celebrating His grace in radical love for Him and people around you by obeying His commands and making use of the means of grace as Christ changes you more and more to bear the family resemblance of holiness and love.
- Extending His grace by telling others the good news of Christ and using all that God has given you (your spiritual gifts, your time, your money, your networks) to support the church through giving generously and sacrificially.
- Belonging to His community as a significant, but not self-sufficient part of this body.

### 5. *Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, promising to promote its purity and peace?*

- In this vow, you are agreeing to submit to the leadership of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church and our regional and national governing bodies.
- It is important that you understand the ramifications of this. In the event that you disagree with the leaders of the church, especially in a disciplinary case, you have full recourse to the courts of the church, but by joining Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church you are agreeing not to involve the church in civil courts.
- You are also committing yourself to a balanced pursuit of purity and peace, of truth and love. This means that you will deal with conflict in biblical ways—in honest, loving confrontation—and that problems will be brought to the pastor and elders; you are promising to avoid gossip, slander, and all hurtful means of communication.
- You are agreeing to real accountability. You are submitting yourself to the elders of this church for your spiritual growth and service to the body. It can be both the most difficult and the most rewarding of commitments and should not be entered into lightly.

## SUMMARY

**T**here you have it—a synopsis of what we want to be as a church and what it would mean to belong as a member of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church. Regardless of whether you are ready to join now or not, we hope that you will feel welcome as a part of this community. If you decide to join at this time, we will be thrilled to have you as a member. If you decide not to join—or decide to think about it a while longer—then please know that we welcome your active involvement in the life of this church. It is Christ who will build this church as He intends and we hope that we will always be responsive to His leading.

If you are trying to decide what to do about membership, please keep two thoughts in mind:

- ❖ On the one hand, you should not join Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church unless you are ready to be committed. People some times join a church for all the wrong

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reasons. Since membership is an holy covenant, you should not join unless you can honestly and self-consciously affirm all the implications of the membership covenant.

- ❖ On the other hand, baptism and church membership are normative for the Christian life—a life lived within the community of the church. If you are a committed follower of Jesus Christ, then He calls you to active participation and membership in His church (though not necessarily this particular one of course) including if you have not already done so, receiving Holy Baptism. As we noted at the beginning, Cyprian had it right when he said, “No one has God as Father, who does not have the church as his mother.”

Whether or not you officially join Christ The Redeemer Presbyterian Church, we pray that God would use this church to change your life and to equip you to change the lives of your friends and family. We are delighted to have you as a part of this worshipping community that we believe God will use to transform Portland through the gospel of Jesus Christ, the only true Redeemer.

**MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE AS YOU TRUST IN HIM,  
SO THAT YOU MAY OVERFLOW WITH HOPE BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**—ROMANS 15:13**