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The Case for Responsible Church Membership

Often you have people who asked this question. Why should I join a local church as I am comfortable being a visitor with no commitment? The universal church or the global Body of Christ (Rom 12:5) is composed entirely of elect and true believers in Christ. Non-believers are not part of that Body although they may attend the Sunday service, and we pray for their salvation. But the bible speaks of the existence of local churches too. During the time of the early church, *'the Lord added to them daily such as should be saved'* (Acts 2:47). **This verse indicates that salvation is the pre-requisite for being 'added' to the local church in a geographical place.**



Reformed churches that require evidence of salvation (ie. examined by the leaders) for some and the WCF shorter catechism class to be attended (for some churches) before the acceptance of membership which is the needful, responsible and proper thing to do. There should be a commitment to follow Christ and participate in the life of a local church. This involves being baptized as a believer and submitting to the leadership and teachings of that specific church community



The prophet in Mal 3:16 says: *'Then they that feared the Lord spake often to one another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name'*. Similarly, we infer such a list from Revelation 20:12 with its focus on the Lamb's book of life. So, if the Lord has a 'membership roll' in heaven for the elect, it is surely right for local churches to establish and maintain a list of its true members on earth, to the best of its ability.

Firstly, membership is needful as it comes with accountability to God and to a local church are also strongly implied in Paul's instructions in 1 Cor

5:12. The verse speaks of those 'without' and 'within' the church. **All such language is meaningless without a clearly defined group and local community of members who are accountable to God within that community and submitted to the counsel and godly discipline of the elected leadership of the church, consistent with the word of God.**

Just like in a family. Members of a local church have privileges and duties too in the church family to attend church service regularly and partake the sacraments and to pray and support the work of the gospel in that particular church.

Secondly, it is a way of publicly identifying yourself with a local group of Christians who worships and serves the Lord together. It is a statement that you are in agreement with their doctrines and practices and that you are a legitimate representative of it, accountable to God and to the church. **While we believe in the universal church, it is also important to belong to the visible church where you are** In the New Testament, there were churches in Corinth, Philippi, Galatia, Ephesus and so on. They were local churches with local membership comprising a local resident Pastor, Elders and Deacons (lay leaders as in some denominations) to guide and take care of the church members which is their responsibility in the biblical model.



Thirdly, Church membership determines in a rightful manner who is permitted to play a role/part in the life of the church ministry and be involved in her gospel work. Members have a vital part to play in a church's life, growth, direction and the mutual edification of the flock and even in supporting missions and gospel outreaches. They have to profess in their membership initiation that they adhere to the biblical standards, the doctrinal stand and the constitution of that local church publicly which is rightly so. It is only right that committed members be give responsible positions of service in the church as opposed to a visitor who is not openly committed (ie SS teacher, chairing the service, youth, BS leader etc.)



Finally, **Church membership is also needful from an ecclesiastical organizational point of view.** It is a right way of determining who is allowed to vote on important church decisions and who is eligible for official church positions and other important matters because they are one of us . Church membership is not required of Christians for salvation but is the will of God for us to be openly part of a local church as in the New Testament times for these various purposes . Membership is, in effect, a way of saying, *"I believe in God, and I am not ashamed to be a Christian; and, I identify with this particular church where Christ is the head."*

So, it is biblical to consider joining as as the church member of a Bible-believing church after attending it for a suitable time and finding that you have been ministered by the preaching of the Word, the worship and fellowship. It is proper to join and identify with a certain body of Christ that God has put us into and be part of that local community to worship and serve the Lord more effectively and corporately.

Conclusion

To be a “*perpetual visitor*” to a church is likened a man who courts or dates a girl in a non-committal relationship without ever wanting to marry her; and continuing this way through many years of serious relationship. That would be strange and irresponsible to say the least.

May the Lord guide each one of us to do what is right and to God's glory in this matter of God honouring accountable church membership in the will of God.

Jack Sin



*“.....to testify the gospel of
the grace of God.”
Acts 20:24*



Salvation Testimony

- Joseph Chan -

I was born into a Christian family but drifted away from God when I was in the military service.

Thereafter, in my years of growing up, I knew of God, but I can't say that I knew Him although I thought I did. To me, the love of God was a hazy concept. I mistook God's love to me as His tolerance and mild enjoyment when I was nice and kind, and I measured God's love to me by the imperfect love of man. I felt lost with a deep sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction in life.



Psalms 16:11 – “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: In thy presence is fulness of joy; At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”. This is exactly what God did for me. He made Himself known to me at a time when it wouldn't have crossed my mind to seek Him again.

In 2006, my wife asked me to bring her to Church, and we started to attend Sunday service in Calvary Jurong BP Church, this was the Church that I was attending in the past.

Looking back, I believed that the Holy Spirit was at work, convicting me of my need for God, even if I didn't know it yet. In the past, I have forgotten about God, but He never forget me.

Luke 15:4-5 *“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?” “And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing”* God sought me out and told me that I had nothing to offer Him, not my intellect or anything that I could do for Him, but that He still loved me because I am His.

I know that I sin because I am a sinner, not the other way round. But through His words, I have learned that God's standards are infinitely perfect, holy and righteous, and I cannot meet them. But at the calvary cross, Jesus did what 2 Corinthians 5:21 says: *“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”*.

I carried guilt and shame, burdened by my past mistakes, I repented from my sins, and trusted in Jesus Christ's completed works for my salvation. I believed the gospel with all my heart, and I put ALL my trust in the blood of Christ that was shed for me. Through God's forgiveness and redemption in Jesus Christ, in 2009, together with my wife, we received our baptism in Calvary Jurong BP Church.

I can testify that over these last couple of years, God has been good to me. I cannot say that it has been an easy road, but I could confirm that my life has been transformed. Our God has been faithful to me and has not forsaken me, and I know He

will never forsake me. Now I received the free gift of eternal life which Christ promised all who believe in Him, I have a purpose, the peace and joy that I never had before, especially when I am in His Holy house.

Although I am still learning and growing in my faith and had rejected God's love before, the promise of Jesus Christ that through His death and resurrection, I can draw near to our Heavenly Father ever I am still a sinner. Because of the work of Jesus Christ, I have peace, joy and happiness. It's a wonderful encouragement to know that there is no obstacle to stop me to approach God, thought our wonderful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the blessed assurance of my salvation as well as the hope of eternity with God.

Salvation Testimony

- Lilian Tan -

I come from a non-Christian family.

In 2003, I worked in a Catholic Kindergarten as an Admin Assistant. Besides doing paperwork in the office, I have to help in taking care of the children during mealtimes as well as bringing the children to the chapel to sing and listen to bible stories by the class teacher. I felt good listening to Bible stories.



One day, I met a friend who is a Christian. She shared God's word with me. I was convicted that I am a sinner. The only way to be forgiven of my sins is to receive Jesus Christ to be my Saviour. I believe only Jesus Christ can forgive my sins and save me, because He died on the cross and rose again on the third day, and is now alive forevermore.

I talked to my husband and we decided to attend Calvary Jurong BP Church together. From there, I began to learn to pray and to read the scriptures. Every time I met with a problem, I felt calm after praying to the Lord Jesus Christ as I know He will always be there to listen through prayer. I was baptised in 2009.

I was hardly able to attend church service for many years due to shift work after joining the Airport as a Customer Service Agent.

After retirement, my daughter had introduced my husband and me to attend Sovereign Hope for the Church services sometime end of 2024. I felt so welcomed. Everyone is so helpful and approachable. The preaching is clear. I told myself this is the church I want to grow with. As 2 Peter 3:18 says, "to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ", I hope to grow to learn more about Him, and love Him. It is my prayer that I will be able to walk closer to God through listening to His Word and fellowshiping with like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ.

***Sovereign Hope BPC
Worship Service & Seminar
Guest Speaker:
Dr Andy McIntosh
24 Aug 2025***



Brethren from Nepal.



Taiwan: Mercy & Courtney



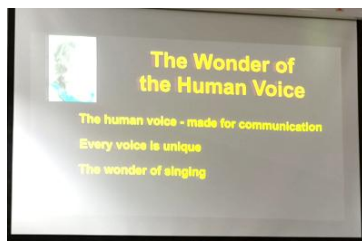
Amber from Xi'an



10yo Ezra & Aunt Joyce from Perth



Greetings from
Pastor Babu of
New Covenant
BPC, Bangalore,
India.



Creation Seminar by
Dr Andy McIntosh on
"The Wonder of the
Human Voice".



Fellowship Lunch at BreadTalk IHQ.

All Asian Creation Conference (22 & 23 Aug 2025)



Praise God for an edifying time
of learning Biblical Creationism
covering Biology, Physics,
Chemistry & Cosmology from a
Christian perspective.
***"How Great Thou Art,
O Lord!"***



Memory Verse

2Thes 1:12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. Those who share the church vision to acquire a place of worship in due time, may designate your offerings to the SHBPC Church Building Fund.
2. Pastor brings us God's Word this morning on ***"Be Worthy of His Calling (2Thes 1:1-12)"***, continuing the quarterly series on ***"Sacred Meditations on Christ and the Coming of the Anti-Christ (1 & 2 Thess)"***.
3. Next Sunday, Rev Philip Heng will bring us God's Word on ***"Faithful Co-labouring with the Church Stewards in the Local Church (1Cor 9:9-16)"***.
4. SHBPC Annual Congregation Meeting cum Election will be held after the worship service this morning. All members are to pray and attend
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on New Testament Foundations and the Psalms. [Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode: 218178].
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode: 625551].
7. **Outreach at All Saints Home (Tampines)** will be held on **Sat 13 Sep 2025 at 10am**. Register with Dn Yue Kay by Sun 7 Sep.
8. Pray for:
 - **Medical: Pit Yuen** [Post-radiotherapy recovery], **Agnes' Parents** [health & salvation], **Mrs Philip Heng** [stroke recovery]
 - **Joseph & Rachel:** GPS Outreach at Ang Mo Kio
 - **Lily Almon:** Singapore Citizenship Application
 - **John Almon:** Application for course at Nanyang Polytechnic
 - **Bangalore Mission Trip [11-15 Dec]:** Pastor, Dn Yue Kay, John W, Shaun & Zoey (Brunei)
9. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Kindly indicate **"Church Building Fund"** if you would like to designate towards this cause.