

## ***RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH***

### *Selected Scriptures*

Whether your Christian life began just yesterday or twenty years ago, the Lord's intent is that you regard commitment to His church a central priority in your life. Membership in the body of Christ, the local church, is precious gift from God. It is a gift that we should cherish and treasure with great joy and gratitude. Since it is a gift and blessing from the Lord, formal church membership should not be taken for granted or considered lightly. We should therefore learn and understand the biblical reasons why we should commit ourselves to be a formal member of our local church.

#### ***1. Commitment to the church demonstrates the reality of our \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord Jesus.***

Joining a church or committing oneself as a member of a local church will not save you. God's Word clearly teaches that our salvation is purely and exclusively by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus and his finished work on the Cross when he died for our sins and rose again for our redemption (Eph. 2:8-9). Though church membership does not save, it however serves as an outward reflection of the reality of our salvation (Acts 2:41,47; 5:14; 16:5). In addition, commitment to the church demonstrates the reality of our love for the Lord Jesus. If we truly love the Lord, we too will love the church that He gave himself for (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28; John 21:15-17).

#### ***2. Commitment to the church reinforces our \_\_\_\_\_.***

Our biblical accountability in terms of our commitment to the local church involves mutual responsibility to fellow believers and loving obedience to church leaders. The best place for Christians to exercise mutual love and concern for one another is in the assembly of God's people called the local church (Heb. 10:24-25). This is the reason why in the New Testament, we find numerous one another exhortations. Believers are exhorted to love one another, serve one another, bear with one another, confess sins to one another, build up one another and pray for one another (John 13:34; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 5:13; Col. 3:13; Jas. 5:16; 1 Thes. 5:11). As members of the local church, believers are also accountable to lovingly obey and submit to their spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). We are instructed to respect and esteem our pastors and leaders because they are given the sacred task of caring for our spiritual welfare.

#### ***3. Commitment to the church expresses our adherence to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christian faith.***

In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul refers to the church as the pillar and buttress of the truth. In terms of their function, a pillar holds up or support the roof of a building while a buttress helps to stabilize the walls and pillars of a large structure. In the same way, the church of the Lord is called to uphold the truths of God's Word. It is the solemn responsibility of every local church to solidly and unshakably uphold, proclaim, teach, apply, defend and safeguard the essential truths and doctrines of the Christian faith.

# ICOP Membership Policy

Welcome to *International Church of Praise*. *ICOP* is an evangelical, Bible believing church called by God to grow as a family of believers, committed to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known. This church was founded on August 9, 1995. We are a member of the Christian Reformed Church of North America.

## A. *Our Philosophy as a Church*

The main philosophy of our ministry is dictated by the Scriptures and could be summarized as follows:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the Church is built. (Matt 16:18). Therefore, He is rightfully the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22).
2. The Bible, God's inerrant Word, as received by the Prophets and the Apostles is the basis of the teachings of the Church (Ephesians 2:20). Every believer is therefore fully subject to God's Word in all matters of faith and practical aspects of the believer's life.
3. The Church is the assembly of people who have been called out, received spiritual birth (John 3:3) to belong to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:19,22; 1 Peter 2:5).
4. Christ, as the founder and head of the Church has given the church a mandate to bring the good news of the gospel throughout all the earth (Matthew 28:19-21).
5. The Church carries out its mission following the pattern of Ephesians 4:11-16.
  - a. The gifted men are called by God to equip the saints.
  - b. The saints do the work of the ministry.
  - c. The goal of the ministry is to mature the believers unto Christ-likeness.
  - d. The end result of the ministry is love, forgiveness and acceptance among the believers for the glory of God alone.

## B. *Our Policy as a Church*

### 1. **Church Government**

#### a. *Church Organization and Set-up*

The Church does not adopt an authoritarian or fully congregational type of setup. The Church adopts a set up based on consultation. The Pastor and the leaders make up the governing body of the Church. As such, the Pastor and the leaders make most of the decisions in the Church. The members are consulted from time to time to ensure that the church policies are catering to their concerns and needs. The Church is organized in a way to provide for the following functions:

- **The Worship Ministry**

This ministry seeks to inspire and enhance the spiritual lives of the members. This ministry includes the following: Praise & Worship in songs, Drama & Choir, Music & Media Library, Instruments, Ushering.

- **Instruction Ministry**

This ministry seeks to instruct and educate the members unto spiritual maturity in their Christian faith. This ministry includes the following: Sunday School, Home Bible Studies, Trainings and Seminars (Doctrines class, Teachers' class, Leadership Class, Evangelism class), & Library Ministries.

- **Fellowship Ministry**

This ministry seeks to involve and encourage the members to participate in building up one another. The ministry includes the following: Children's Ministry, Teens Ministry, College & Career, Men's and Women's Ministry & Golden Agers Ministry.

- **Evangelism Ministry**

This ministry seeks to instill and engage the members into soul winning as it reaches out to the unsaved community by proclaiming the good news of the gospel. This ministry includes the following: Group/Personal soul winning, Hospitality/Socials, Visitation/Follow up & Prayer and Counseling

**b. Church Leadership**

- **The Pastor : His Role and Responsibilities**

The Pastor and the leaders locally govern ICOP San Diego. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and precepts of the Scriptures, the Pastor acts not only as the spiritual leader but the over-all administrator of the church.

However, the Pastor's primary responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and for the edification of the church (Eph. 4:11-12).

- **The Leaders : Their Classification, Role and Responsibilities**

The Pastor appoints the leaders of every ministry, based upon the spiritual gifts entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6-8, I Cor. 11:4-11, 28-31).

These leaders are chosen after considerable time of prayer and having been proven to be faithful, available and teachable in the ministry. The same leaders undergo the basic discipleship classes. These leaders co-shepherd the church to grow in all areas of their spiritual lives. The leadership is classified into two groups,

- \* **The Governing Elders**

The governing elders help the Pastor in overseeing the administrative and ministerial aspects of the Church.

- \* **The Ministry Coordinators**

The Ministry coordinators support the Pastor and the governing elders in the ministerial functions of the Church.

**2. Church Membership**

*a. How do I become a member?*

ICOP has an open & yet formal membership. It is open because everybody is welcome to be a member of the church so long as they conform to the standards and guidelines set forth in the Scriptures. It is also formal because the members are required to be committed to the church standards and guidelines. The following are guidelines for church membership:

- Regeneration or born again (John 3:3, Acts 2:47)
- Repentance (Acts 2:38)
- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:16-18)
- Baptism (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38, 10:44-48, 22:16)
- Continuance in the Apostles doctrine (Acts 2:32)

*b. What are the categories of membership?*

The church has two categories of membership.

- **Active membership** is granted to those who chose to commit their full services to the church.
- **Adherents** are those who do not wish to be active members but who desire the fellowship of the church.

c. *What are the benefits of membership?*

Every active member gets the privilege of becoming a part of God's family of believers and be able to participate in all areas and aspects of the church program, ministry and leadership. In special cases, the members could be called upon for consultation.

d. *What are the responsibilities of members?*

As part of the church family, every member is also encouraged to be responsible not only for their own spiritual growth but for the fellow believers' spiritual growth as well.

The primary responsibilities are as follows:

- Attend worship services for Biblical instruction and fellowship (Psalm 122:1, Acts 20:7, Hebrews 10:25-26)
- Support and promote all the programs of the ministry by:
  - \* Witnessing and sharing the gospel to the unsaved (Matthew 28:19-20)
  - \* Serving others by exercising your spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:12-31)
- Support the financial aspect of the ministry through tithing (Malachi 3:8-12, 1 Cor. 16:2) and offerings (Gen. 14:18-20; 2 Cor 8:1-5).
- Humble subjection to the leadership of the church ( 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7,17)

### 3. Church Discipline

a. The Place of Church Discipline

All grievances, either personal or corporate, are to be brought to the attention of the Pastor and the governing body of the church for appropriate and immediate action. The Pastor and the elders must exercise Church discipline following the principles and guidelines found in the Scripture and no one is exempt from church discipline.

b. The Purpose of Church Discipline

The goal of church discipline is not to throw people out of and embarrass them in the church. Rather, it is to bring people back into a pure relationship within the church assembly.

c. The Process of Church Discipline (Matthew 18:15-17 and 5:24)

- The offended party approaches the offender to inform the offender of the violation and damage that was done to him and to seek admittance, repentance and reconciliation.
- If the first step is unsuccessful, the offended party brings at least two (2) witnesses (preferably the Pastor, an elder and a firsthand witness, all of whom are without prejudice to matter being settled) and seek to do the same as that in the first step.
  - If the second step is unsuccessful, the matter is to be brought first before the church leadership, then to the whole church for the same purpose as in the first step.

- If the offender refuses to take heed to the church leadership, he is to be excluded from membership and treated as an unbeliever. The church will take the following action:
  1. Call for a mourning meeting of the church (1 Corinthians 5:4)
  2. The church judges the accused member (1 Corinthians 5:12)
  3. The church rebukes and expels the guilty and unrepentant member (1 Cor. 5:13).
- In cases where the offender is aware of violating or sinning against a brother, the offender should go and make amends with the offended and seek for reconciliation (Matthew 5:24).
- As to the manner of restoration, it should be done in the spirit of love, gentleness and meekness (Galatians 6:1).
- The Scriptures list the following sins as worthy of expulsion:
  1. Refusal to be reconciled with fellow believers (Matthew 18:15-17)
  2. Failure to submit to church authorities (Matthew 18:17)
  3. Immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1-5,9)
  4. Covetousness (1 Corinthians 5:11)
  5. Idolatry (1 Corinthians 5:11)
  6. Slander (1 Corinthians 5:11)
  7. Drunkenness (1 Corinthians 5:11)
  8. Swindling (1 Corinthians 5:11)
  9. Heresy (John 10:11, Romans 16:17, Titus 1:13, 3:10-11)
  10. Laziness and irresponsibility (2 Thessalonians 3:6,11, 14:15)
  11. Departure from the faith (Galatians 1:8, 1 Timothy 6:3-5)
- d. Restoration to Fellowship and Membership  
Repentant members who show signs or fruits of repentance should be restored to the fellowship (2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1). The church should lift them up, hold them up and build them up so that they may be put back to spiritual stability. The church elders will recommend a restoration procedure which will depend upon the nature and degree of sin committed.

**C. *Our Programs as a Church***

The programs of the church flow from the ministries of the church. Each of the ministries with its goals, set up their respective programs for every member to support and participate in.

**D. *Our Proclamation as a Church***

The proclamation of the Church is to share the whole gospel the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). We proclaim a message of hope with:

**1. *Love***

We love one another because Christ first loved us (1 John 3:16, I John 4:7-11)

**2. *Forgiveness***

We forgive one another because God has forgiven us (Ephesians 1:7)

**3. *Acceptance***

We accept one another because God has accepted us in Christ (Ephesians 1:6)

### ***E. Our Vision as a Church Group***

The Lord has entrusted us with a threefold vision:

#### ***1. To raise up responsible, reproducing Christians***

Responsible Christians are people who are committed to Christ and His command to make disciples of all nations. They are involved in a continuous process of duplicating or reproducing themselves in other people's lives (2 Timothy 2:2).

#### ***2. To raise up responsible, reproducing Churches***

Responsible churches are churches who do not stop at being comfortable with their own group. They are zealous and committed to reproducing themselves in terms of missions outreach and church planting.

#### ***3. To raise up responsible, reproducing mission body***

The mission body is necessary in uniting all these established churches particularly for worship, instruction, fellowship and evangelism. The mission body acts as a catalyst to coordinate all church planting activities.

### ***F. Our Belief as a Church***

As a Church, we believe:

1. That the Bible is the inspired Word of God; inerrant, infallible, sufficient and final authority in all matters of faith in life and in practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. That there is one God, eternally existent in three persons the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4).
3. That God, from eternity past, has freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass, doing it in a manner in which He could not be the author of sin, not violating the will of the creature (Job 14:5; Psa. 31:15; 139:16; Isa. 44:7-8; 46:10; 48:3 ff.).
4. In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to heaven, His personal future return in power and glory (Matt. 1:23, 1 John 2:2, Acts 2:22, Matt. 28:6, John 14:3, Rev. 20:1-6). Christ is at the right hand of the Father interceding for the saints (Rom. 8:34, 1 John 2:1).
5. In the deity of the Holy Spirit, and His work of convicting, regenerating, baptizing, indwelling, sealing and filling men to salvation (John 16:8-11, Titus 3:5, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, 12:13, Eph. 1:3). His indwelling enables the believer to live godly life (Gal. 2:20).
6. That man was created by God in His image to be upright (Ecc. 7:29); both male and female (Gen 1:26) with physical bodies and immortal souls. Man's sin brought separation and the lost communion with God (Rom 3:23, 6:23). Sin brought total corruption in man (Gen 6:5, Jer. 17:9, Rom. 3:10-19; 8:6-8) and spiritual inability to initiate salvation (John 6:44; 65; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 3:10-12).
7. In salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9), the new birth (John 3:3,5; John 1:12-13).
8. In the church, the body of Christ, Christ Himself being the head of the body (Col. 1:18) and believers being the parts of the body (1 Cor. 12).
9. In water baptism and the Lord's supper as the sacraments of the New Testament ordained by Christ Himself (Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 11:26).
10. In the mission of the church to glorify God (Eph. 3:1), promote worship (John 4:23-24) to edify and build up the saints (Eph. 4:11-16), and reach the lost for God (Matt. 28:19-20, Acts 13-14, 1 Cor. 14:24-25).
11. In the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the one to eternal life and the other to eternal damnation (Rev. 20:11-15).

# **MEMBER'S COVENANT**

(Member's Copy)

*Having carefully read the membership policy of International Church of Praise, I have fully understood the meaning and importance of being a member of the body of Christ (the local Church).*

*After I have heard and learned the guidelines and policies of the Church, I am committing myself fully to Church Membership, to support and uphold its doctrines, ministries and programs by the grace of God.*

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*Member's Name*

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*Pastor-Teacher*

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*Member's Signature*

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*Date*

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