

DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COURSE

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Oakhill! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to explain clearly who and what our church is.

THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS

"...You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Eph. 2:19 (LB)

Key Truths:

1. The church is a family.
2. God expects you to be a member of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is an orphan

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS

THAT I WILL COMMIT MYSELF TO CHRIST AND TO THE OAKHILL FAMILY

WHAT MAKES OAKHILL A FAMILY?

Four things unite us:

- **Our Salvation** (What God has done for us)
- **Our Statement** (Why we exist as a church)
- **Our Strategy** (How we fulfill our purpose)
- **Our Structure** (When and where we fulfill our purpose)

Session One

The Oakhill Strategy

*(Paul) "I have been all things to all sorts of people that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do all of this for the sake of the Good News."
1 Corinthians 9:22-23 (Ph)*

WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

"... Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him." 1 Cor. 4:22 (LB)

5 CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT



THE D.U.R.B.A.N.V.I.L.L.E. STRATEGY
11 PRINCIPLES THAT MAKE OUR CHURCH UNIQUE

Defined Target

Unconditional Love and Acceptance

Real, Relevant, Realistic

Behavioural Preaching

Affinity Groups

Networking Together

Very Simple Structure

Influenced by Purpose

Life Development Process

Leadership

Every Member a Minister

Session Two

The Oakhill Structure

*"For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace...
Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."
1 Cor. 14:33, 40*

HOW OUR CHURCH IS STRUCTURED

The structure of the church should *not* be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH DETERMINES ITS STRUCTURE.

I. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP

"They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship..." Acts 2:42 (Ph)

A TOP PRIORITY IN A FELLOWSHIP IS HARMONY AND Unity

*"**Make every effort** to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
Eph. 4:3*

*"**So let us concentrate** on the things that make for harmony and the growth of our fellowship together." Rom. 14:19 (Ph)*

ANY attitude that causes disunity is sin.

Col. 3:15, 1 Cor. 1:10, 2 Tim. 2:14, Pr. 17:14, 2 Cor. 13:11, Phil. 1:27, 2:1-3, Col. 2:2, Phil. 4:2, 1 Peter 3:8, 1 Cor. 14:33, John 13:34-35, 2 Tim. 2:23, Rom. 15:5-6, Rom. 12:16-18, Col. 3:13-14, Ps. 133:1

IMPLICATION: A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWNPLAYS DIFFERENCES

*"(Often)...your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, **there are divisions among you...**" 1 Cor. 11:17-18*

"Voting" tends to bring division in the church.

II. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY

"You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds." 1 Peter 3:8 (LB), Gal. 6:10, Heb. 2:10-12, 1 Peter 4:17

SO WE OPERATE ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIP NOT RULES

*"Don't reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a **father**. Treat the young men as **brothers**, and the older women as **mothers**. Treat the younger women as **sisters...**" 1 Tim. 5:1-2 (Ph)*

*"(A Pastor) must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to **manage his family**, how can he **take care of God's church?**" 1 Tim. 3:4-5*

III. THE CHURCH IS A BODY

1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:23, Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:18, 2:19

We are a body — not a business!
We are an organism — not an organization!

**THEREFORE, WE FUNCTION ON THE BASIS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS
NOT ELECTED OFFICES**

*"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have **different gifts** according to the grace given us." Rom. 12:4-6*

In an organization, "maintenance" becomes the focus. But in an organism, "ministry" is the focus.

**AT OAKHILL WE HAVE A SIMPLE STRUCTURE SO WE CAN MAXIMIZE MINISTRY
AND MINIMIZE MAINTENANCE**

*"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for **works of ministry**, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Eph. 4:11-12*

OUR STRUCTURE

- **THE PEOPLE ARE THE "ministers".**
- **THE PASTORS ARE THE "administrators".**

IV. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK

(Jesus' favourite description of the church)

John 10:1-30, Matt. 26:31, Matt. 25:33

THEREFORE, IT IS CARED FOR AND LED BY SHEPHERDS

*"Jesus asked Simon Peter, 'Do you really love me?' 'Yes Lord,' said Peter. 'Then **take care** of my sheep.'" John 21:16-17*

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the **same** church leaders:

- ◆ **Poimen** means PASTOR or SHEPHERD
- ◆ **Presbuteros** means ELDER
- ◆ **Episcopos** means OVERSEER or BISHOP

*"To the **elders** I say...**Be shepherds** of God's flock, serving as **overseers**..." 1 Pet. 5:1-2*

*"Paul sent to Ephesus for the **elders** of the church. When they arrived he said to them... Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**. Be **pastors** of the church of God..." Acts 20:17-18, 28*

That's the structure of our church. It's very different from the way most churches are organized. In some churches, once you have joined the church, you become a member but you're still not part of the "**in**" crowd. You remain a number and you never seem to be able to "break" into the core group of people. At some churches you can only get involved if you are part of the "**in**" crowd. Maybe after you've been there five or six years they will elect you to serve in some position.

That's **not** how it works at Oakhill. Here you can join today and get involved tomorrow. We don't have a bureaucracy or hierarchy where you first need to meet "our acceptable levels" before you can get involved. It is important for you understand that there are structures and processes that you need to follow. Our structure is there to firstly, bring honour to God and secondly, to help you develop as a Christian and grow towards maturity. You can join today, take Course 2 when you're ready and then move onto Course 3 and be involved in ministry.

Session Three

The OAKHILL Statements

*"Let there be real harmony among you so there won't be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose."
1 Corinthians 1:10 (LB)*

OUR VISION & MISSION STATEMENT *WHY WE EXIST AS A CHURCH*

Vision Statement In One Sentence: Building His Family – Advancing His Kingdom

The **vision** of our church: **"Building His Family, Advancing His Kingdom"** is based on two key scriptures:

At OAKHILL, we believe that a great commitment to the Great COMMANDMENT and the Great COMMISSION will grow a great church.

The Great Commandment: "Jesus said, **Love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**Love your neighbour** as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matt. 22:36-40

The Great Commission: "Jesus said, **Go and make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them** to obey everything I have commanded you." Matt 28:19-20

Mission Statement in One Sentence: Love God, Love His People, Live Life and Advance His Kingdom

To bring people to Jesus and *membership* in his family,
Develop them to Christ-like *maturity*,
And equip them for their *ministry* in the church
And life *mission* in the world,
In order to *magnify* God's name.

From the above two scriptures, there are **5 eternal purposes**. They are:

- To "Love God with all your heart" is **"WORSHIP"**.
- To "Love your neighbour as yourself" is **"MINISTRY"**.
- To "Go...make disciples" is **"EVANGELISM"**.
- To "Baptise..." is to **"INCORPORATE INTO FELLOWSHIP"**.
- To "Teach them...all things" is **"DISCIPLESHIP"**.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- **In essential beliefs — we have unity.**

"There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all..."
Eph. 4:4-6

- **In non-essential beliefs — we have liberty.**

"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God." Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22

- **In all our beliefs — we show charity.**

*"...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains — but have **no love**, I amount to nothing at all."* 1 Cor. 13:2 (Ph)

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE:

1. ABOUT GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has existed eternally in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27, 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

2. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13

3. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18

4. ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

5. ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1, 2

6. ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8, 9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5

7. ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and embracing power of God that gives us this security.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

8. ABOUT FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES

We believe in the Foundational Doctrines that should be laid in every Christian's life as stipulated in Hebrews 5:12 - 6:2.

The six doctrines are Repentance from dead works, Faith toward God, Baptism(s), laying on of hands, Resurrection of the dead, and Eternal Judgement.

- We believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin and to be in right standing with God is to be born again through repentance and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances – Baptism in water and the Lord's Supper to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witness to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith, that Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a confession of identification with Christ in burial and resurrection and that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of the emblems symbolic of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death, until He comes.
- We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, empowering and equipping believers for service, with the accompanying supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit; and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. We believe in the divinely ordained ministries of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.
- We believe that blessings, spiritual gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit can be imparted or transferred from one person to another, through the laying on of hands.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the just and unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and the eternal banishment of those who have rejected the offer of salvation.

9. ABOUT AUTHORITY

With regards to submission to authority, we believe in the principle of being in authority, because you are under authority as such, it is understood that OAKHILL membership shall be subject to submission to authority in matters pertaining to church governance, doctrine and personal behaviour. A Senior Pastor and a governing eldership govern OAKHILL.

10. ABOUT AFFILIATION

We have a friendly, cooperative, submissive relationship with Church of the Nations (C.O.T N.).

This ministry serves God's kingdom both nationally and internationally. We are only part of the body of Christ. We aspire to work in cooperation with, and learn from, other ministries that confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

11. ABOUT ETERNITY

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Cor. 2:7-9

OUR LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

What We Practice

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on what the Bible teaches, we feel very strongly about the following ten practices:

RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

John 15:12-13 *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.* 1 John 3:18 *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*" We need to learn how to love and accept every brother and sister in Christ, regardless of race, gender or social status. The flavour of OAKHILL as a church is love and acceptance. We build strong relationships (friendships) with other members and we lay down our lives for each other. It is easier to love and lay down your life for a friend than a stranger. We build relationships by spending time with one another.

THE BIBLE IS OUR SOLE AUTHORITY

2 Tim 3:16 *The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right.* At OAKHILL we do our best to make sure that the Bible has the final say on all matters. No creed or denominational statement will do, only the whole Bible. The Bible is the final authority for this church and your personal lifestyle and behaviour. Whenever there is a question on what to do, we know where to look first. The Bible can be trusted as an authority figure and mentor for our lives.

PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER

"Christ loves us, and by His death He has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve God..." Rev. 1:6 (GN) *"You are...the King's priests...God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God."* 1 Pet. 2:9 (GN) The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to "full time" Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. Nobody here has special titles and wears special suits, robes or collars. We don't need anybody to be a middleman between us and God, like priests used to do. We are all priests. We all have equal access to God. The pastors of this church have no special hot line that gives them special access to God. Jesus made this possible by His death and resurrection. We all have become servants in God's household. We all have the shared responsibility of telling others about Christ and worshipping before Him.

SPIRIT-LED LIVING

John 15:5 *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.* NIV Jesus is the source of life for every single day, not just for salvation. You need to reconnect yourself daily to God, not in terms of salvation, but in terms of dependence. We cannot live this life in our own strength. He is the source of life and we are dependent on Him for strength. Trying to live life in your own strength is like trying to mow the lawn with an unplugged electrical lawnmower. It is frustrating and exhausting. We need to plug ourselves in to the Holy Spirit.

Remaining plugged in to Jesus produces benefits (fruit) like: Spirit-led emotions (Gal. 5:22-23), Spirit-led morals (Eph 5:9), Spirit-led decisions (Matt 3:8), Spirit-led speech (Hebr. 13:15-16), Spirit-led labour (Phil. 1:22) and Spirit-led guidance (Rom 8:14).

AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Jesus Christ is the head of the local church. Not Louis, not the elders. Jesus Christ is the recognized honored head of this church. Because of that, we are a body and we work together. Jesus is the head of the whole church therefore there is value in associating with other groups of Christians. This church however makes its own decisions about its finances, land, property and staff. No denominational control from outside can tell us how to run this church and what to do with our finances. No one can tell Louis to move to another church. This church makes its own decisions. We are autonomous.

PRACTICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH PRAYER, WORSHIP AND THANKSGIVING

1 Thess 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you; 1 Tim 2:8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting ...*

Prayer is talking and communicating with God even though He is invisible. It is building a loving relationship with the most important person in the universe. Praise and worship is singing to God. You should give praise to God with the same enthusiasm we have when the Springboks are having a good game. Be thankful to God in all circumstances, because God loves it and it is good manners.

TELLING OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST 1 TIM 2:8

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15 It is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to share the story of how you came to be a Christian. You are a witness that God is alive and that He loves people. You don't have to know the whole Bible, just write down a witnessing plan and memorize it. All you need to do then is tell people about God and what He did for you.

We make an effort to preserve peace and harmony

Eph 4:2 *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. NIV*

We bear with each other and we forgive each other when we make mistakes. We all become offended with another brother or sister in Christ at some time. It takes effort and determination to keep the peace and harmony in a group of imperfect people who are all growing to maturity. In this church we must learn not to give offense easily and not to take offense easily. At OAKHILL, differences on minor matters are negotiable, but the preservation of peace, harmony and relationships is not negotiable.

Tithing

1 Cor 16:2 *On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. NKJV*

The word tithe means ten percent. It is the way we finance this church. We don't finance it through raffles and other fundraising. We finance this church through the members giving ten percent of what they earn back to the church. Nobody is ever going to come and check up on you. We will not come to your house like the Mafia and say, "You are three months behind. Cough up the money or else!" Never! It's between you and God. We will however teach on what the Bible says on it, because then it will become something between you and God. It is the responsibility of the people who commit themselves to membership here to give and support the work of the church.

FATHERS AND SONS, MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

1 Cor 4:15-17 *For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 1 Tim 5:1 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity. NKJV*

We have earthly fathers and mothers that take care of us when we grow up. In church we have spiritual fathers and mothers that take care of us when we grow spiritually. These fathers and mothers serve as models for us to follow. We need more than teachers in Christianity, we need good examples to follow. Find yourself such a person that can walk the road to maturity with you. In time you might become a spiritual father and mother yourself.

Session Four

Our Salvation

"For now we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and we who have been baptised into union with Christ are enveloped by Him. We are no longer Jews or Gentiles, or slaves or free men, or even merely men or women, but we are all the same — we are Christians; we are one in Jesus Christ."

Galatians 3:26-28 (LB)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing "WHY?" They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God's purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, "What is the meaning of life?"

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways:

- ...Some look for happiness by **acquiring possessions.**
- ...Some look for happiness by **experiencing pleasure.**
- ...Some look for happiness by **gaining prestige & power.**

But real happiness comes from understanding my
Purpose

I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. GOD MADE ME TO love ME!

God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love!" Jer. 31:3

*"Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ ... **because of His love.** God had already decided that through Jesus Christ He would make us His children — this was God's pleasure and purpose."* Eph. 1:4-5 (GN)

2. WE WERE CREATED TO ENJOY A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND TO MANAGE ALL OF THE REST OF GOD'S CREATION! THIS MAKES US SPECIAL!

"So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said, live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge." Gen. 1:27-28 (LB)

"God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." 1 Tim. 6:17

Jesus said, "I have come in order that you might have life — life in all its fullness!" John 10:10

3. WHEN WE KNOW AND LOVE GOD, AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES, IT PRODUCES TREMENDOUS BENEFITS IN OUR LIVES:

Clear Conscience

Rom. 8:1

Purpose

Rom. 8:28

Power & Strength

Phil. 4:13

Life & Peace

Rom. 8:6

Confidence

Rom. 8:31

Fulfillment

Phil. 4:19

Help with Weakness

Rom. 8:26

Security

Rom. 8:39

Freedom

John 8:32,36

II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

MAN HAS A NATURAL DESIRE TO BE THE BOSS AND TO IGNORE GOD'S PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING.

"Look out for no one. Do your own thing."

"If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it."

"It's my life and I'll do what I please!"

THE BIBLE CALLS THIS ATTITUDE: SIN

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way." Isaiah 53:6

"If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth." 1 John 1:8

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

"The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God." Isaiah 59:2 (LB)

"All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal." Romans 3:23

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives — marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.

"There are ways that SEEM right to man, but they only end in death." Proverbs 16:25

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- "My mother was a Christian so ..."
- "It doesn't matter what you believe; just be sincere."
- "I'll give up all my bad habits."
- "I'll work real hard and earn it."
- "I'll be religious and go to church."

III. WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Jesus Christ said, *"I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!"* John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person!

JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!

"The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

"God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8

"God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind." 1 Tim. 2:5

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

IV. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1. **ADMIT THAT GOD HAS NOT BEEN FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.**

"If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong." 1 John 1:9

2. **BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN ON EASTER, AND IS ALIVE TODAY.**

"If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you **believe in your heart** that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

3. **ACCEPT GOD'S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON'T TRY TO EARN IT.**

"For it is by grace you are saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift of God** — not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

4. **INVITE JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND BE THE DIRECTOR ("LORD") OF YOUR LIFE.**

"To all who **receive** Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who **believe** this are reborn! — not a physical rebirth...but from the will of God!" John 1:12-13

"Jesus says, 'Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...'" Rev. 3:30

YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian."

"Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTISED

I. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

1. **TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY CHRIST.**

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptised by John in the river." Mark 1:9

2. **BECAUSE CHRIST COMMANDS IT.**

"Jesus said, 'Go then, to all people everywhere and **make them my disciples**, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and **then teach them** to obey everything I have commanded you.'" Matt. 28:19-20

3. **IT DEMONSTRATES THAT I REALLY AM A BELIEVER**

"...many of the people who heard Him **believed** and were **baptised**." Acts 18:8

"We know that we have come to know Him, if we **obey** His commands." 1 John 2:3

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

1. IT ILLUSTRATES CHRIST'S BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

"Christ died for our sins... He was buried...and He rose again." 1 Cor. 15:3-4

"For when you are **baptised**, you were **buried** with Christ, and in baptism you were also **raised** with Christ. Col. 2:12

2. IT ILLUSTRATES MY NEW LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN.

"When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!" 2 Cor. 5:17

"**By our baptism then**, we were **buried** with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was **raised** from the dead...so also **we may live a new life!**" Rom. 6:4

Baptism doesn't make you a believer — it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not "save" you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring — it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith** ... it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

III. WHY BE BAPTISED BY IMMERSION?

BECAUSE JESUS WAS BAPTISED THAT WAY.

"As soon as Jesus was baptised, He went up out of the water." Matthew 3:16

EVERY BAPTISM IN THE BIBLE WAS BY IMMERSION.

(Example) "...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water..." Acts 8:38-39

THE WORD "BAPTISE" MEANS TO DIP UNDER WATER".

The Greek word *baptizo* means, "to immerse or dip under water".

IT BEST SYMBOLIZES A BURIAL AND RESURRECTION!

The founders of denominations agree:

Martin Luther..."I would have those who are to be baptised to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."

John Calvin..."The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

John Wesley..."Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."

IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?

EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST.

"**Those who believed** and accepted His message were **baptised**..." Acts 2:41

"Simon himself **believed** and was **baptised**..." Acts 8:13

"But **when they believed** Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptised**, both men and women." Acts 8:12

At OAKHILL, we wait until our children are old enough to **believe** and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

Some churches practice a "*baptism of confirmation*" for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. **This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible**, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ.

V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!

"Those who believed...were baptised...**that day!**" Acts 2:41

"Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, 'Look, here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptised right now?' Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The man answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So they went down into the water and Philip baptised him." Acts 8:35-38

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptised. If you wait until you are "perfect", you'll never feel "good enough"!

CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTISED TOGETHER?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptised at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a *personal* statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays *your* obedience.

COMMUNION

I. WHY TAKE COMMUNION?

THERE IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT COMMUNION REMINDS US OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

The main reason for this is most of us believe that unless we repent of **all** our sins before taking communion we can bring damnation upon ourselves.

WHAT GOD REVEALS TO US IS THAT COMMUNION IS NOT A LAW TO BE OBSERVED BUT A GIFT TO BE RECEIVED, A BLESSING OF GRACE AND righteousness.

II. WHAT IS COMMUNION?

Matt 26:26-29

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

NIV

There are two elements involved: bread and wine.

1. THE BREAD IS SYMBOLIC OF JESUS' BODY, THE BODY THAT WAS BROKEN FOR OUR HEALING AND DELIVERANCE.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 *For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.* NKJV

PAUL POINTS OUT A POSSIBLE REASON FOR SICKNESS, AND PREMATURE DEATH WHEN HE SAYS, "FOR THIS REASON".

WE USE COMMUNION BUT WE DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THE POWER OF THE BODY OF JESUS THAT WAS BROKEN FOR US SO THAT WE MAY HAVE HEALTH.

The logical conclusion is that if you recognize the power of the broken body of Jesus as you eat it, you can receive healing.

2. THE WINE IS SYMBOLIC OF THE THE BLOOD OF JESUS, THAT WAS SHED FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Eph 1:7-8 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. NIV*

WE SHOULD CELEBRATE WHEN WE DRINK THE WINE WHICH SYMBOLIZES THE BLOOD OF JESUS, BECAUSE OF HIS BLOOD WE ARE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD AND WE CAN COME INTO HIS PRESENCE KNOWING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IS RESTORED.

III. HOW SHOULD WE TAKE COMMUNION?

1 Cor 11:27-30

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. NIV

In verse 29 it says if you eat and drink **unworthily**, you bring damnation on yourself.

Unworthily

USING COMMUNION UNWORTHILY REFERS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU EAT AND DRINK. HE IS NOT SAYING THAT WE NEED TO REPENT OF EVERY SIN EVER COMMITTED BEFORE WE TAKE COMMUNION; HE IS MERELY REFERRING TO A SITUATION THAT WAS TAKING PLACE IN THAT TIME. PEOPLE WERE TAKING PART IN COMMUNION NOT TO CELEBRATE JESUS, BUT TO FILL THEIR STOMACHS WITH FOOD AND TO GET DRUNK ON WINE. THIS OF COURSE IS TAKING COMMUNION UNWORTHILY IN FACT IT IS TAKING GODS NAME IN VEIN AND BRINGS JUDGMENT UPON US. WE TAKE COMMUNION TO CELEBRATE WHAT JESUS DID FOR US AND TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE RIGHTEOUS BECAUSE OF HIS BODY THAT TOOK OUR PLACE.

OUR AFFILIATION

Jesus said repeatedly that His church is the Body of Christ. Just as a physical body needs all its parts to function together for a common purpose, so we (Oakhill) believe that in order for God's Kingdom to advance, we need to partner with other ministries and churches. Affiliation really means "relationship". At OAKHILL we realize the importance of having healthy, Godly relationships with other churches and ministries. OAKHILL is connected to and covered by **Church of the Nations (COTN)** and our direct relational input comes from Apostle Louis Els.

COTN Mission Declaration is: Building a family of Churches – Reaching the nations.

COTN Vision is: To plant, build and strengthen local churches with the goal of advancing God's Kingdom

COTN Strategy is to:

- ◆ Bring people into wholeness, equipped and released to fulfill their destiny
- ◆ Raise up leaders
- ◆ Train
- ◆ Foster local Ministry
- ◆ Release church planting teams
- ◆ Arrange conference and Leadership gatherings
- ◆ Be involved in missions and Evangelistic outreach
- ◆ Run Mercy Ministries
- ◆ Establish of Apostolic Clans.

For more information about COTN, please visit their website: **www.cotn.org**

WHY NOT JUST AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH

We *are* an independent church! We have our own vision and purpose. There is no denominational control or hierarchy. We are self-governed and determine our own affairs, but we are not "independent" in the sense of being "detached" from the rest of the global Body of Christ. We choose to have a covering and affiliation and acknowledge the fact that if Jesus walked in relationship with His disciples, then we should follow His example and walk in relationship with churches.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING AFFILIATED

1. We can **identify with other Christians** around the world who are known for their commitment to the Bible. COTN has no man-made "creed" and the Bible is our only authority.
2. Our COTN family offers us **protection**. Being part of the COTN family means that they look out for our best interests and we have their support.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "ATTENDERS" AND "MEMBERS" CAN BE SUMMED UP IN ONE WORD: **COMMITMENT**

At OAKHILL we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons:

I. A BIBLICAL REASON: CHRIST IS COMMITTED TO THE CHURCH

"...Christ loved the church, and he gave his life for it." Eph. 5:25

II. A CULTURAL REASON: IT IS AN ANTIDOTE TO OUR SOCIETY

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything - a job, a marriage, our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of "church shoppers and hoppers". Membership swims against the current of South Africans' "consumer religion." Commitment is an unselfish decision and always builds character.

III. A PRACTICAL REASON: IT DEFINES WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

IV. A PERSONAL REASON: IT PRODUCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you're not committed to any specific church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At OAKHILL we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Commitment.

THE OAKHILL MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

"Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior, and being in agreement with OAKHILL's statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the OAKHILL church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By acting in love toward other members**
- ...By refusing to gossip**
- ...By following the leaders**

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." Rom.15:19 (Ph)

"Live in complete harmony with each other — each with the attitude of Christ toward each other." Rom15:5 (LB)

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." 1 Peter1:22 (GN)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Eph. 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Heb. 13:17

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By praying for its growth**
- ...By inviting the un-churched to attend**
- ...By warmly welcoming those who visit**

"To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." 1 Thess. 1:2

"Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full." Luke 14:23 (LB)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Rom. 15:7 (LB)

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

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- ...By being equipped by my pastors to serve**
- ...By developing a servant's heart**

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..." 1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)

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"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." Phil 2:3-4, 7

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By attending faithfully**
- ...By living a godly life**
- ...By giving regularly**

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another." Heb. 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Cor. 16:2

"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Lev. 27:30

WHERE CAN I GET CONNECTED

Life Groups

At Oakhill we believe in growing bigger by growing smaller...That means that to feel part of the big church we need to be part of a small group. We have two kinds of Small Groups that you can belong to, namely Life Groups and Mentoring.

A lot of our growth and maturing in life takes place when we do life with fellow believers. To do this we meet weekly at each other's homes to have fellowship, pray and learn. We have different Life Groups available that will cater for different needs (age, child friendly or not and in which area). These groups are open for people to join throughout the year.

Mentoring

ME2 mentoring is about ladies building a lifestyle of transforming relationships while doing life together. We commit on a yearly basis to meet monthly in our groups where we share the Word, pray together and encourage one another, thereby creating a safe place to grow in God and love one another.

Men love a challenge...Men are strong willed...Men are leaders...

At Man Alive, we intentionally walk with God and deliberately build relationship with one another. We commit on a yearly basis to meet monthly in our groups and fellowshiping together.

WHERE CAN I GET INVOLVED

OAKHILL KIDS

You have kids, love kids or want kids....this is all about kids kids kids...enough said. Volunteers serve every 3 weeks and we cant wait to have you join our team, be it helping at the Registration Desk or assisting with our special needs kids.

WORSHIP

Can you play an instrument, then we want you...even drummers are allowed. Besides Sunday, services and events, we come together as a Worship Team every Thursday at 19:00. We use this time to worship together, build relationships and get equipped to grow as individuals and as a family.

LEARN2LIVE

Learn2Live, our community upliftment department, focuses on the first 1000 days of a child's life, as a vehicle to build relationship with the community! This relationship acts as a platform to change lives from the inside out. There are various projects from Clothing Store to Library to Crèche Training that you can get involved in.

CREATE

This fun, eccentric, creative team are responsible for everything that happens in the main auditorium during a Sunday service as well as any events. We try and create a multi-sensory sermon experience and to create an atmosphere that is reflective of God. Production entails Lights, Media, Vision mixing, Camera, Sound and Stage managing.

GUEST SERVICES

We want our guests to say "Wow! I'm impressed," within the first 10 minutes of their visit.

The heart of guest services is creating a warm, welcoming, embracing culture, placing value on people and connecting them into our family.

Guest service teams perform duties at Sunday Services either in the mornings from 07h30 to 10h30 or evenings from 17h00 to 20h00 and at special events during the year. Guest services consist of the following ministries.

USHERS

Among other things, you will (with a massive smile). with a smile, assist with passing out bulletins, answer questions, help people find seats, taking the offering, and helping handle any emergencies..

COFFEE TEAM

Can you make the ultimate cup of tea or coffee? If you want to share this skill with our volunteers and guests, then feel free to come do so on Sundays and various events...qualified barristers welcome.

BABY ROOMS

Our baby room team welcomes and assists parents with babies from 0 -23 months to get settled in at our 3 nursing rooms located throughout Oakhill. This is the perfect place for Moms who have babies who would love to serve.

INFO DESK

If you are into detail and have some communication skills, then our info table is where you belong. Here you will provide information and facilitate registrations for classes, small groups, volunteering and events as well as provides details about Oakhill to the guests.

TRAFFIC

They are a friendly face, and assist people to find a parking place and keep the traffic flowing smoothly.

EVENTS

Got a keen eye for visual / interior design...well we need hands to assist with the brainstorming, organizing, planning, and executing of special events / conferences for our church.

APP DESK

For this one, you may need some tech skills, as you will be assisting others with details on apps/tech that we use at Oakhill and assist guests on how to use them.

PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

Name		Cell Number	
Surname		Work Number	
Email		Home Number	
Birth Date (dd/mm/yy)	____ / ____ / ____	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Occupation		Home Language	
Address			

Family role	<input type="checkbox"/> Head of household <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Child
Current relationship status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> In relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Married with kids <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widow <input type="checkbox"/> Widower
Current relationship with Christ	<input type="checkbox"/> Seeker / Curious <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure what I believe <input type="checkbox"/> New Christian <input type="checkbox"/> Committed Christian <input type="checkbox"/> Christian, but need to grow closer
Have you been baptized by submersion ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, would you like to be baptized? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any medical conditions?	
I have the following expertise:	

PREVIOUS CHURCH DETAILS

Previous church's name	Previous pastor's name
Reason for leaving previous church?	
What is your church leadership experience?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Group / Home cell leader <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Course Facilitator / Presenter <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify your experience here _____)	
Are you currently involved in / lead any ministries outside of OAKHILL?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please supply ministry name _____	

INFORMATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS:

Spouse's Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Does your Spouse Attend OAKHILL?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Children:	First Name:	Last Name:	Gender:	Birth Date:	Lives with You?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Yes / No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Yes / No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Yes / No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Yes / No

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DISCLAIMER

I do not want to receive Oakhill related communications by:

- Phone SMS Email Family Statement (e-statement)

By completing this form you have indicated on your application form whether or not you want us to contact you to inform you about Oakhill related news, information and family e-statements.

I _____ have carefully read the Membership Commitment and I fully understand what it entails. I agree with the Biblical principles stated and I now commit myself to be a family member at Oakhill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

LIFE GROUP AND MINISTRY SIGNUP FORM

Name

Surname

I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE FOLLOWING:

Life Groups

Yes No (If yes, please complete **Section A**)

Ministries

Yes No (If yes, please complete **Section B**)

A. LIFE GROUP INFORMATION:

Do you have any preferences with regards to people you know?

Do you need to be in a toddler or child friendly group?

Yes No

Have you been in a OAKHILL Life Group before? If so where...?

Yes No

B. I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE FOLLOWING MINISTRY:

Oakhill Kids Ministry

Create Ministry

Guest Services

Learn2live Ministry

Worship Ministry

Where volunteers are needed

COURSE FEEDBACK FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING

How did you hear about this course?

What part of the course did you find most beneficial?

Do you see the value in this course for other people that you know?

Yes No

Why?

Other comments, if any?