

Step one: Determining the Existence of a New Testament Local Church

CGN is a network of Churches, therefore, the first conversation should be walking through the “Portrait of a New Testament Church” document below:

A Portrait of a New Testament Local Church

Non-negotiable: Biblical & Transcultural Characteristics of the Local Church

We regard the following characteristics to be the non-negotiable, transcultural aspects of a legitimate New Testament local church. Embodiment of these characteristics is a prerequisite for eligibility for CGN membership.

1. Gospel Fidelity

Church leadership must understand, affirm, and proclaim the gospel-centered nature of all of scripture (Acts 2:14-26), a nuanced theological gospel (i.e. Romans; Galatians), and a short-hand grasp of the gospel for evangelism (Acts 2:38-41). A gospel-centered understanding and practice of Christian living and community should be the aim of the local church, and modeled by church leaders. It is the gospel that gives birth to and shapes the spiritual organism of the body of Christ in any given context, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. Converted/Regenerate Members (Not necessarily organizational “membership”):

A biblical local church consists of those people who are regenerated (born again) by faith in the gospel of the Jesus of the Bible (Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 10:14-17; Eph. 1:13-14).

3. Committed/Intentional Community:

Biblical local churches are characterized by members who are “committed” to regular, contextually appropriate rhythms of gathering, to engage in central spiritual practices (i.e. discipleship/spiritual formation, teaching/learning, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayers etc.; Matt. 28:19-21; Acts 2:42, 46; Heb. 10:24-25).

4. Committed to Core Communal Spiritual Practices of a Community of Disciples:

Community life in biblical local churches is centered in and built on shared engagement in at least the following practices portrayed in Acts 2:42:

Teaching: The “apostles’ doctrine” is the apostolic message that the life, death, resurrection, ascension, second advent, and future universal kingdom of Jesus, is the central teaching of all scripture, hope of humanity, and core of biblical faith, for God’s people. This is what we understand to be the, “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Fellowship: Fellowship involves partnership in mutual care, encouragement, exhortation, and accountability, rooted in a shared commitment to the biblical gospel and person of Jesus (Acts 4:32-37; Rom. 12:1-11; 1 Cor. 12-13).

Breaking Bread: Breaking bread is a symbol of the “one body” nature of the spiritual family of the church, and the cross-centeredness of the faith and life of God’s people, in part demonstrated through the communal observance of communion (Lk. 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Prayers: “Prayers” refers, at minimum, to the gathering of God’s people in corporate worship and petition of God through formal and informal prayer, centered on the gospel of Jesus (Matt. 6:5-15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:15-16; Heb. 13:15).

5. Qualified, Spiritual Leadership:

A biblical church local is established, cultivated, and overseen by qualified leaders, who are born- again through faith in the biblical gospel, empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, mature and growing in Christ-like living (Acts 2:42a, 43; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9).

6. Sacrificial Member Care/Ministry (Giving + Body Life):

A biblical local church consists of members who are cultivating and practicing care toward one- another within the challenges and practical needs of daily life (Acts 2:44-45; Js. 2:14-17).

7. Evangelism/Honorable Reputation:

A biblical local church is missional in orientation, having an outward-focus toward connecting those who do not know Jesus to Him, through the gospel. They share the gospel with their words and show the transforming power of the gospel with their deeds. Additionally, the local church is incarnational, adjusting to the cultural characteristics of their community for the sake of effectively communicating and demonstrating the gospel to those around them. The local church should be uncompromising with the gospel, and adjustable in terms of forms, practicing prophetic graciousness, and thereby working to cultivate a good name for Jesus and the local church within the local community (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 9:19-23).

8. Biblical Ordinances:

A biblical local church practices, at minimum, the ordinances/rituals of Believers’ Baptism and Communion/Eucharist (Matt. 28:19-21; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). We see both ordinances as symbolic practices that make the preached gospel visible through ritual, and keep the community of believers centered on the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ for spiritual, social, and vocational life.

Any church model or local church expression that embodies the above transcultural marks will be considered for inclusion in the Calvary Global Network, including, but not limited to:

- Non-profit corporations (501c3 or equivalent)
- House Churches

- Satellite Churches
- Multisite Churches
- Cell Churches
- Simple Churches
- Missional Communities
- Organic Churches
- Others

Negotiable: Culturally and Contextually-flexible Characteristics of Local Churches

The following list is intended to guide a conversation about the organizational health of the church with the cultural context and specific church expression in mind. Some of these markers will not be applicable in certain cultural contexts:

- Church legally established (501c3 in USA or equivalent depending on country)
- Bylaws
- Board of directors/elders
- Financial viability
- Bookkeeper
- Meeting place
- Ministry team (worship leader, kids ministry, etc.)
- Member critical mass

Step two: Membership Conversations about theology and ministry philosophy.

Below are conversation starters, please ask these questions at minimum but feel free to build on these topics as you see fit.

Membership Conversations

- Introduction

- Get to know the pastor. His testimony. His family history, his call to ministry and experience up to this point.
- What attracts you to the Calvary Global Network?
- What is the present health of your church? What are the current struggles and victories in ministry?
- What is the history of the church? Any other affiliations or past affiliations?
- Who are your influences? Dead or alive.
- What are your current passions?
- If you could do any ministry in the world, what would it be?

- The Bible

- What are your views on the inspiration of scripture? (Inspiration, authority, infallibility, inerrancy)
- What is your teaching style and structure? (Exegetical exposition, thematic, verse by verse, topical series, etc.)
- What translation do you use and why?

- God

- Explain the Trinity
- Explain the nature of the Father • Explain the nature of the Son
- Explain the nature of the Spirit

- Man (Anthropology)

- What is your understanding of creation and the fall? • Explain the nature of man.
- What is the Gospel?
- What is your view on marriage and divorce?
- What is your view on gender and sexuality?
- What is your view of gender roles in the home and the church?

- The Work of the Spirit

- What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer?
- What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church?
- How does the Spirit work within the fellowship of believers in your church?
- Do you believe the gifts of the Holy Spirit are visible and active in the church today? Why or why not?

- Eschatology

- Explain your eschatological position.
- How important is your eschatological position in preaching on a Sunday to Sunday basis?

- The Church

- Explain your current church government position. First among equals? Pastor Lead? Plurality of elders? Congregational model?
- Does your church have formal membership structure? Why or why not?
- What does a healthy church member look like?
- What does discipleship look like within your church?
- What is your understanding of biblical giving and how do you facilitate that in your church?

As a CGN Local Connector, we are confident that you are well enough acquainted with the theological positions of CC and CGN to recognize whether a candidate is a good fit or not. However, please make a point to review the Calvary Chapel statement of faith [HERE](#) leading up to membership conversations. Note: A church that is seeking CGN membership is not required to hold a pre-tribulational view, though they are required to be premillennial in their eschatological convictions. Once again, if you have any questions or would like guidance along this process please do not hesitate to reach out.