



BECOME A CHURCH MEMBER

TAKE YOUR SEAT AT THE FAMILY TABLE

Titirangi
BAPTIST CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

You've picked this up because you're interested either in what we believe about church membership or maybe because you're considering becoming a member at TBC.

Thanks for taking time to consider these things - your interest is a huge encouragement.

Take time to read through this booklet and to have conversations with others from TBC about the ideas that shape how we think about being a member of a church, and especially the basis of membership at TBC.

I hope you find it helpful and challenging, inspiring even. I also hope that you find increasing comfort and challenge in the life, death, resurrection, ascension and anticipated return of the Lord Jesus and that among us at TBC you will find your church family, and come to sit at our family table as one of the clan.

In Christ



Andy Shudall
Senior Pastor

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE.

Everyone is welcome at Titirangi Baptist Church. Whether you are a regular at church or have only come for the very first time, you will be welcomed, warmly! You belong here because we are people who have received the welcome of Jesus in our own lives and extend that welcome onto others.

In the gospel accounts, the biographies of Jesus that we have in the Bible, we are told that Jesus welcomed children as the equals of adults; he spoke with women and men on the same terms and issued them with the same challenges; he took time to speak with disabled men and women; made a point of honouring those who were considered shameful by their peers, offering them exactly the same call to eternal life as those who were wealthy, admired and secure. Jesus welcomed everyone and still does today.

This is the reason that YOU are welcome at TBC. We're a church that celebrates every age and stage of life. No one will be made to feel uncomfortable because of how they dress or

where they come from. Everyone is to be treated with love, respect and honour. Jesus has welcomed us all and calls every person to faith in Him.

That relationship with Jesus means change, transformation and an invite into a community of people who are imperfect. You're welcome because, like us, you're what the Bible describes as a sinner: each of us choosing to do the stuff we know to be wrong, and we holding back from doing the stuff we know we should be doing.

It is our job to love one another, Jesus looks after changing our lives, in the power of His Spirit according to the glory of God the Father. Because of this, EVERYONE, is welcome here: including you.

**Jesus
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MEMBERS, CHILDREN, CITIZENS, AMBASSADORS

"there is one thing that should be utterly clear in a Christian's mind: the local church does not exist by permission of the state. It exists by the express authorisation of Jesus."¹

Church isn't a social club nor a voluntary organisation nor a service provider for the community. Church isn't a place you can go to nor an event you attend. Church is not something which meets your needs nor is it a cultural gathering. Church may be described by referencing some of these things at times, but church is not the things that people do, see, build or visit. But we don't navigate by what we're avoiding: we have more of a sense of who we are, that in what we are not.

■ **Church is the body of Christ** - and that body is made of diverse members. People from all racial, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, equal and united by faith in Jesus, adopted as the children of God, empowered by The Holy Spirit. One body, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one hope² - diverse in expressions of what church looks like in different places and parts of the world, different even in the things we may emphasise from the Bible but ONE. Church is a body, and that is why we talk about church membership: part of the body.

■ **Church is about who we have become.** Church is defined in relationships; God has acted to adopt us as his beloved children, reconciling us to Himself: we are loved as His own people and this miraculous shift in identity means we are first and foremost loved for who we are and not what we have done. Church is God's family, church is His children.

■ **Church is the people of God's Kingdom living under the rule of their King.** Here and now, we demonstrate the compelling beauty of God's grace to us in Jesus by how we live under the His Lordship. We are part of God's plan to reveal himself and show his goodness. The Kingdom, to all people. In Christ, before all other identities and allegiances, we are citizens of another time, another place, another country: The Kingdom of Heaven, our home.

■ **Our Church, is a one outpost of God's Kingdom, one expression of the Body of Christ in our corner of Auckland,** we are living day to day in order to point others to the coming King. "A church is not the kingdom; it's an outpost or embassy of that kingdom."³ We are not the only church community in our area, but we are God's people here and now with a call to serve him today as we are and where we are.

¹ Leeman, Jonathan. Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus (9marks: Building Healthy Churches) (Kindle Loc 171-172). Crossway. Kindle Edtn.

² Ephesians 4:1-6

³ Op Cit, Kindle Locations 255-256

GUESTS, FRIENDS & FAMILY.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME BUT NOT EVERYONE IS FAMILY, NOT YET.

There are situations when you are at someone's table as a guest - you are welcomed, you don't need to lift a finger but are served, honoured and appreciated. Hospitality is shown to you and you leave feeling recognised, loved even, fully welcomed and at ease.

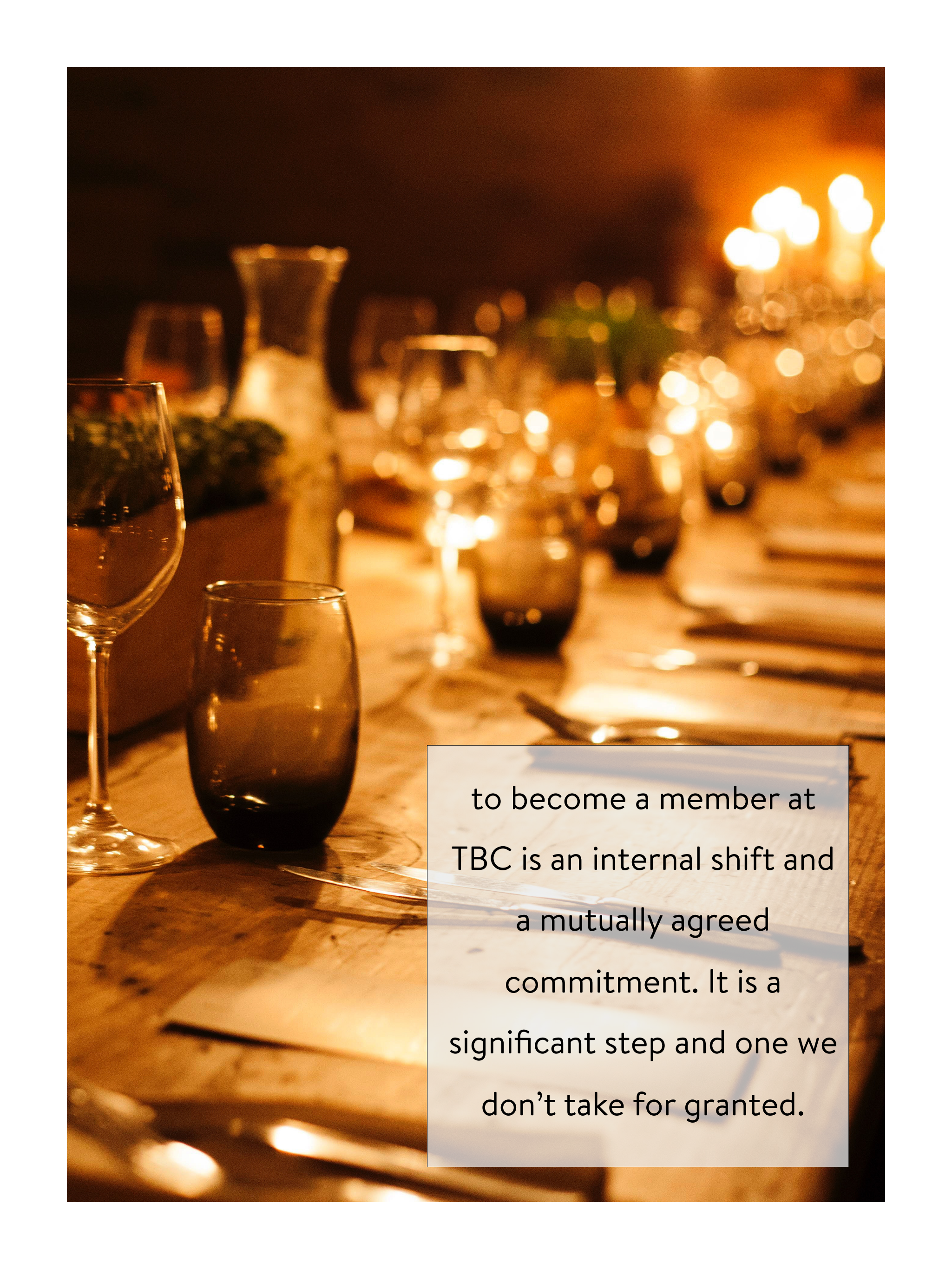
This is how it should be when you first arrive at a Titirangi Baptist Church service or event. We hope that you were welcomed, acknowledged for who you are, spoken with about how things are for you, asked about how you found us and how you're finding us. If you didn't that's not good and not how it will be in the future.

You can become such a regular guest at someone's home that you feel like family and begin to pitch in at meal times, help out around the place at times, share some of the highs and lows of life, contribute to special family events, give and receive gifts. You move from guest to friend: you know that you have a place in that home, that you'll always be welcome and that you're invested there. You give and receive love in that place - even helping to extend hospitality to guests who arrive at the family table. You are aligned to the household values and share their commitments. You are seen and valued as part of the household's life.

That's how it is when you've been at TBC for a while; you're developing friendships, people miss you when you're not around, you have helped out at a few events and maybe even joined a home group and a roster or two for duties. You find yourself sharing in the commitment to TBC's statement of faith and love of Biblical teaching. If you're thinking about being a member, this is probably where you are at right now.

You become a family member when an important decision has to be made, and your life is bound up in it - you have, so to speak, been adopted in. The house has to be decorated, do you have a say? The finances need to be restricted, do you tighten your belt? Moving to family status involves an internal shift of attitude and an explicit shift in the relationship. Something obvious happens, agreed by all, and is made and somehow formalised. You become a family member when your joys and problems become a family matter and vice versa. We step from guest to friend on the basis of liking one another, but we become family members in a mutually expressed decision.

That's what it means to become a member of a church like TBC: it's an internal shift of attitude, it's something you choose, but it is also an explicit and mutually agreed commitment between the church family and you. It's a significant step and one we don't take for granted.

A warm, dimly lit restaurant table with wine glasses, water glasses, and cutlery. The background is softly blurred, showing more tables and warm lighting. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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TBC is an internal shift and
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OUR FAMILY CONVICTIONS

We are part of the Baptist family of churches and have our own Statement of Faith, this means that:

THE BIBLE IS OUR FIRST AND FINAL AUTHORITY FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE AND HOW WE LIVE.

It's not just important to us, or part of how we live — it is where we go to hear God speak, as we begin to think through what is true or false, right or wrong; it's also how we finally decide if what we think is in line with God's character and will. That's why the Bible shapes how we do church, forms the focus of our teaching in church services and is part of our activities outside of Sundays. This is expressed in our statement of faith, which outlines our core family convictions. Find our statement of faith at www.tbc.org.nz/#believe

THE MEMBERS OF TBC MAKE FAMILY DECISIONS UNDER THE HEAD OF OUR FAMILY, JESUS.

It's a feature of gentle ribbing: 'baptists vote'. It's a feature of our history that this is really true. Members' meetings where all had a vote was a radical step in England back in the eighteenth century when Baptist churches emerged. The poor, the landless and women had no vote in society — but in declaring all people equal under Christ, ALL members are given a say in church life. We still believe that, as a body of believers, it is in our mutual and agreed seeking after Christ that He speaks, under Scripture's voice and the Spirit's lead. This is what we mean when we speak of 'congregational leadership' — we lead and make decisions together.

WE DON'T BAPTISE ADULTS OR CHILDREN - WE BAPTISE BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST.

The bible's pattern of 'believe and be baptised' is a command that all who want to follow Jesus should follow. We don't disrespect other's Christian traditions for their views on baptism but we respectfully disagree. Baptism means 'to immerse' and so we practice believer's baptism by full immersion. To be part of our family is to affirm this part of our family beliefs. Becoming a member of our church whanau normally means that you have been baptised as a believer, though the elders can accept people from other backgrounds into membership on a case by case basis.

WE ARE DIVERSE IN OUR BACKGROUNDS, BUT UNITE IN JESUS AS LORD.

We can disagree on all kinds of things: but our convictions around where we differ come under the authority of who we believe in. There is genuine liberty of conscience within TBC and our commitment under Christ's Lordship to his rule in our lives means that we are still clear on the basis of our faith being non-negotiable. What we disagree on is of far less importance than that which holds us to Christ and therefore binds us together. We choose unity in diversity because Jesus has made us diverse but called us together as his people.

OUR FAMILY VISION

TITIRANGI BAPTIST CHURCH
CALLED IN CHRIST
TO COMMUNITY
TO THE WORLD
TO GOD'S GLORY

Vision is not simply about words on a page or repeated in our conversations. The church vision is where we're looking, our direction of travel — the destination that we are headed toward in our journey, and the core principals we remind ourselves about when we think, pray and plan.

TITIRANGI BAPTIST CHURCH - since 1954 the church that is now known as TBC has been living, worshipping, witnessing, growing and serving here. Beginning our journey as "Atkinson Valley Church of Christ Life and Advent" we soon became "Kaurilands Church of Christ Life and Advent" and in the late 1990's we became "Titirangi Baptist Church". This is us, we are for here, our place is local with a distinctive flavour of church that is family focussed, child friendly, informal, a dynamic youth work, a lively ministry among the seniors community. We could be all kinds of different but we are us, as you find us, looking to welcome you here.

CALLED - Who we are and what we are did not begin in human imagination. God has brought us together, from all over New Zealand and around the world. Some people have returned to this part of town after years away, other's have never left. Each one are called by God into TBC - God is building us as His community in this corner of creation for his purpose. None of us are here by accident, we are together by his design and for His purpose.

IN CHRIST - It does not matter where you were born or how you were brought up, men and women, rich and poor, Maori, Pacifica, Pakeha - all and everyone who belongs to Jesus and

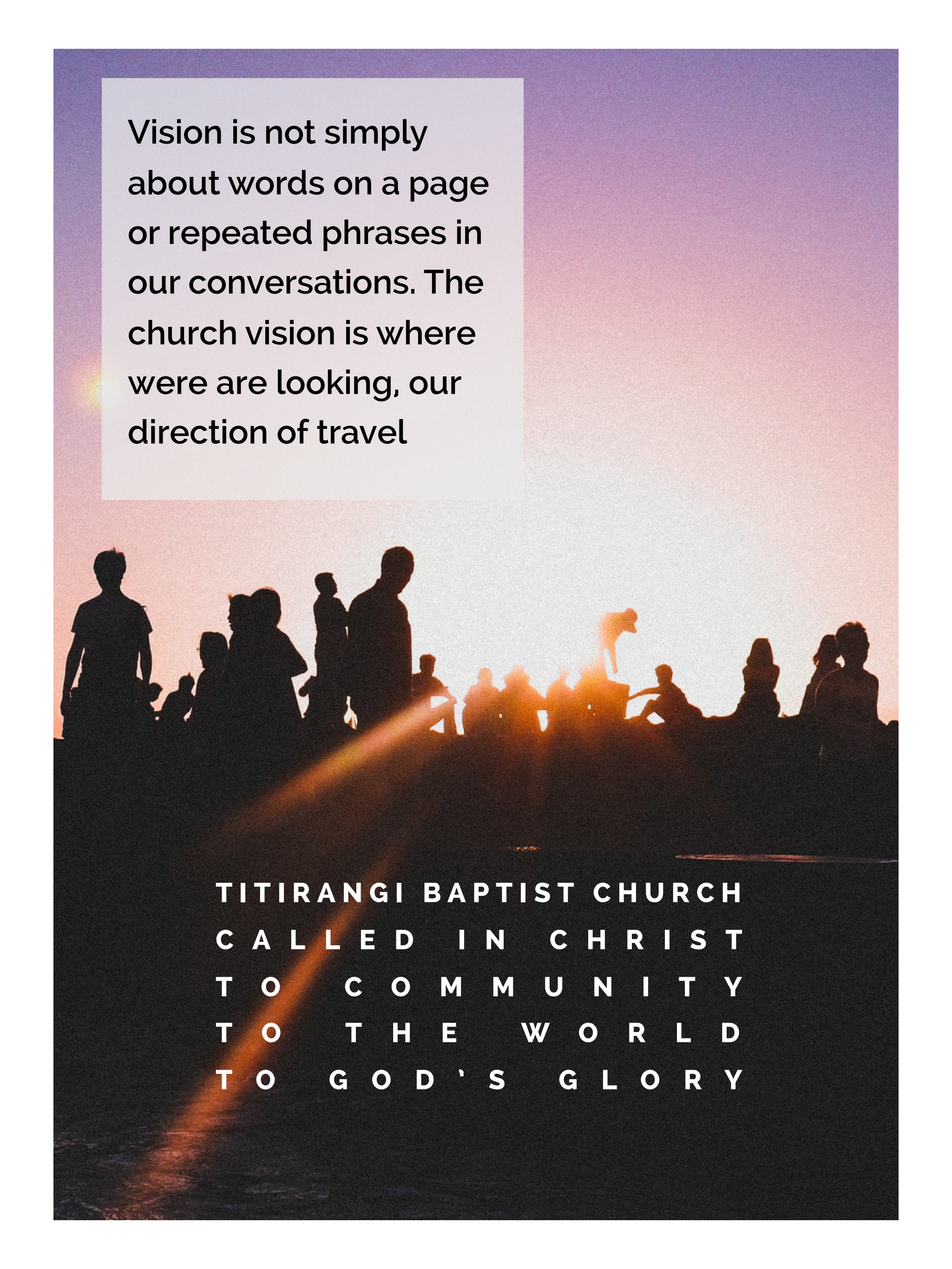
has been baptised as a believer is eligible to become members of TBC church family. Social rank and ethnic background, educational levels and employment status are all secondary to our position in Christ. Our national, political, ethnic and social backgrounds are of less importance than our relationship to Christ. It is only in Jesus and through a response of trust, love and obedience to his life, death, resurrection and ascension that we come to know God as Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is our first and primary allegiance - this is what defines us in our life together.

TO COMMUNITY - When we come to Jesus we come not only to Him as individuals but we in Him we become part of a wide, diverse and growing community that will exist forever - The Church. TBC is one expression of that church and whatever our background we know and affirm that everyone has a place given by God and in that everyone is equipped and enabled to play a role as part of who we are. God gives people gifts to serve the growth of His Kingdom and gives people as gifts to strengthen and further the growth of His church as he builds the reach of His Kingdom. We need each other because God has designed us that way - we come with needs and gifts, weaknesses and strengths and God will use all to bring His glory. Every member at TBC is encouraged to be serving in our community to build God's Kingdom.

Everyone who is in agreement with the church statement of faith, and is supportive of our vision and values in community is eligible to become part of the TBC church family.

TO THE WORLD - God so loved the world that He sent his only Son, Jesus and Jesus said, 'as the Father sent me so I send you'... And so we are people sent by God's love, with God's message, in God's authority and with God's great command to love enemies as though they were family and to love neighbours as though they were our own flesh and blood. We are called to go to the ends of the earth until the ends of the age - and so we look to the world on our doorstep and don't limit where God might lead us. The command is to go as we are called - to make Christ known in service and world, in sacrifice and gain and to keep on until the very end.

TO GOD'S GLORY - God is the focus now of how we are to live as individuals and as a church community: we live for God's glory not our own. We are not simply waiting for a future day for this to happen, but we live to the day when all will see God's glory made known and so now we choose Him and His good above all other goods, including our own comfort - seeking to deny ourselves, take up our cross, in order that we might follow Jesus in the glory of His resurrection power. We seek God's glory today in our daily action and lives, being transformed in the power of the Spirit and giving glory to God in all that we are doing.



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TITIRANGI BAPTIST CHURCH
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OUR FAMILY CULTURE

■ **Church isn't a place, nor simply what happens on a Sunday morning.** Church is as much a noun as it is a verb: it is who we are, not what we do. Generally when people say, 'church' they refer to 'going to church', meaning a church service or the church buildings and that can really shape what we think about. **WE** are church, not the place we meet or the worship services we are part of; people not activity. We are God's family: that is the first value we hold. Church is us: a building or an activity can't be 'called in Christ'. As church members we commit to consciously resisting 'church as a place' or 'church as an activity' thinking; we are committed to one another because God has called us together in Christ. We are church, we are God's people, called together in Christ. As God's people we are active, engaged in this world in love and service: but that's what we do, not who we are.

■ **We are committed to each other's good and for the benefit of all.** This means we are committed to one another - families don't choose each other but accept their ties together are strong and have privileges and responsibilities. Family is given to us, not something we invent. God, in Christ Jesus, adopts people into His family, by faith according to grace, the family likeness is seen in how we relate to one another. Jesus said, 'they will know you are my disciples by your love for each other'. Love is for good times and difficult patches; it is a commitment and a calling. Love is the boundary of our community: we have been loved by God, we are sent in God's love to this world and it is by love that we are recognised as authentically belonging to Jesus. Our family is made up of those who commit to living this life together: encouraging and supporting each other. This means a lot of standing: standing alongside, standing up for and standing with one another through the gains and losses of life. It is active and costly, comforting and rewarding.

■ **Family members take the lead:** as in the home, so too with the church, those responsible for the upkeep and running of the household are those who belong to it. Church members are those who shape and provide the decision making in our life together. We make decisions together, not based on what best suits us or what we prefer, but seeking to discern together in the power of the Spirit, under the Word of God, what the mind of Christ is in our life together. Thus, those in leadership within our church are those who are fully part of our family; sharing our convictions, shaped by our core beliefs and committed to our life together: staff, elders, ministry leaders are entrusted to lead from within, as family members, with family responsibilities for the good of all and under the leadership of Jesus.

We lead together, make decisions together and move together: membership is key in understanding how we do this.

The TBC leadership Kaupapa is a statement of how we understand and apply the values we see in Scripture about how we approach leadership. It arises out of our core convictions in our Statement of Faith.

These are the things that we use to check in with each other, shape our action and assess how we are doing in discussing, thinking and acting, in decision making, and moving forward.

The Leadership Kaupapa isn't just for leaders in TBC - it is the platform on which we stand in leading together. Members of TBC commit to working together in the light of this Kaupapa; it is not

about rights and demands, it is about the opportunity to show and receive love as leaders and in our life together. These are values which we hold to. These values will give us opportunities to reflect on how we are doing and what we are doing. This platform will enable us to encourage each other when we are doing well and correct one another when things don't go as they should. This Kaupapa is our way of doing family and should be obvious as we relate to one another, the guests who come to our table and the world around us as they witness us reaching out and serving.



LEADERSHIP KAUPAPA

Titirangi
BAPTIST CHURCH

TBC LEADERS

HONOUR GOD Seek His will above our own, and commit to discerning God's lead together in prayer and discussion.

RESPECT PEOPLE Valuing relationship and seeking to honour and build up all in the Body of Christ.

SERVE ALL Sacrificially seeking the good of others above the needs of self, acknowledging the call to serve above the desire to be served.

LOVE FAITHFULLY Acting patiently, encouraging the good in all circumstances, building up the individual believer, and the Body of Christ, at TBC.

DEMONSTRATE INTEGRITY The words and ways of speaking to and of one another, and how we behave toward each other, are consistent with Biblical exhortations to be inwardly transformed.

INCLUDE OTHERS Valuing the work of the Spirit in equipping the whole body and each member with gifts to contribute; we value and harness the perspectives of others toward the common good.

RELEASE AND EMPOWER Affirming the work of the Spirit in the people of God, we trust others to use their talents, gifts and skills in doing God's work.

LEARN HUMBLY Seeking feedback, responding positively to critique and criticism, and seeking to be the first to forgive.

Defining "Kaupapa"

As with many words in Te Reo Maori, "Kaupapa" has several related meanings: 'platform' / 'policy' / 'raft' / 'main body of cloak'

So our Leadership Kaupapa is the platform we stand on, the way we behave, that vehicle which carries us forward and how we are clothed. Intentionally we stand on, live by, travel through, and are wrapped in, our Kaupapa.

OUR FAMILY VALUES

Becoming a church member, joining the family, is a fairly simple process.

Having been around at TBC for a while, checking in conversation that you are ready to make the commitment to TBC and receive the commitment from the other church members you simply write to the church elders and request to be considered for membership. The easiest way to do this is via email: elders@tbc.org.nz or you can write a short note and address it to the elders and hand it in to the welcome desk on a Sunday morning.

Those who wish to be members of TBC are asked to express that commitment in several areas of growth:

UNITY IN FAITH

We agree with the church statement of faith is something that brings clarity and union, solidarity around the things we hold in common in the light of Scripture's teaching. This statement of faith is available on our website www.tbc.org.nz/#believe.

STRENGTH IN WORSHIP

We prioritise regular attendance at worship services; we seek opportunities to worship with family and friends outside of organised church services; we cultivate patterns, habits and disciplines of personal worship and devotion to God; we are with our church family whenever possible on a Sunday.

DEPTH IN DISCIPLESHIP

We seek to understand Scripture to live under its authority so that we become more like Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit; we give and serve generously and wholeheartedly; we respect and honour those in leadership, pray for them, accept their pastoral encouragement, direction, correction and admonition.

CLOSER IN FELLOWSHIP

We commit to relationship, building a genuine depth of relationship to build one another up in love of Christ and his mission; we join in the prayer life of church; we serve using our spiritual gifts so that the body of TBC may be strengthened as God intended in equipping each for the common good; we share in the financial responsibilities and decision making of our church life.

BROADER IN MINISTRY

We serve in church ministry areas and acknowledge that our professional lives and home lives are no less a context for ministry; we seek to extend the ways in which we are equipped and are ministering; we come to serve rather than be served;

LARGER THROUGH EVANGELISM

We are missional, we go, as we are sent, in love; we are conversational as we seek to express our hope in Jesus so that it might be understood; we are incarnational, living as salt and light in the world where God has placed us; we are situational, drawing no boundaries around where or when God might place us in His service.

OUR FAMILY FINANCES

Church is not a social or a sports club; it is not a subscription service nor a pay as you go scheme. Church membership does not require a certain level of financial giving before you can join. Church members are people who are committed to living in loving obedience to God with regard to financial giving. So members are people who give recognising the following to be true.

We have received ever before we give. "In the beginning God", God is first and gives first: creation, life, relationship, fruit of the earth, satisfaction in work, joy in life... all are given by God and come from Him as an act of generous provision. Ever before we give, we have received.

We give in response to God's generosity. God provides for His people. Jesus instructs us to pray for 'our daily bread' and so in our daily patterns of living, working, receiving and earning we give to God out of what He gives to us. All that we have has come from Him to us in love, and so our giving is a response to His generosity toward us.

We give as an act of worship. To worship God is to actively and consciously give to Him the place, praise and priority that He is due in our lives. Worship is the joyful, hopeful, deep and sometimes painful, powerful response of God's beloved creatures - all the more so for Christians as we see the depth of God's character revealed in Jesus. In financial giving we honour God in response to who He is. We give not to receive from God but because we have received from Him already.

We give as a first priority. Throughout Scripture we see God's people respond with their best in response to God's greatness: first fruits of the harvest, the first animal born, the first share of the earnings. As those loved by and now loving God in Christ, we respond to God's generosity in giving as our first priority. God is not to be given our left overs and what we can spare once all our essential and social needs are catered for but as our first and foremost priority in worship.

We give in costly sacrifice. Giving in worship as a first priority is not normal in our culture, giving to charity is admired and a good thing to do, but the emphasis in Scripture is on giving up, denying self and honouring God. Sacrifice is painful and costly. Sacrifice means you give not to benefit yourself but selflessly and without keeping a record. Giving sacrificially means that there will be things that you enjoy that you may forgo in order to give. A billionaire giving ten million dollars is less sacrificial than a beneficiary giving five

dollars - sacrifice is not about the monetary size of the gift, it is the cost to the giver and the weight with which they give to God in their giving.

We give joyfully and carefully. There is no compulsion from TBC to give: it is entirely possible to be a member of TBC and not ever contribute to the financial needs as we pursue the vision of church; it is possible but it is not in line with the spirit of membership to do so. However worship is not a matter of what you must do because it is expected, but rather what you must do because of your heart response to God's grace in your life. This is joyful giving. There is no target that you must give; the Old Testament sometimes speaks of a 'tithe' (i.e. ten percent) as the Lord's portion (Lev 27:31-32; Mal 3:8) which must be returned to Him. The New Testament brings a stronger emphasis on the whole of life belonging to God and the heart of the believer and the 'tithe' can become a false basis for measuring righteousness (Matth 23:23). So we give joyfully and carefully, ensuring that we do not think God is in our debt as we give ("I've given so faithfully, so God has to look after me") and at the same time we give carefully so that we do not neglect our obligations to family and national community (Matth 27:6; Mark 7:11; Romans 13:5-7).

Handling Finances @ TBC

Our finances are managed by the Management Team which is led by our Operations Manager, administered by the church staff team and overseen by the church elders. A full report on our how we're doing in our vision and how we're handling our finances is presented every year at the AGM. We are audited each year by independent auditors.

The members of TBC participate in the setting of a budget in line with the vision and values of the church. Budgets are normally presented to members toward the end of a calendar year in order to be enable ministry in the next year to begin with confidence.

Everyone who gives to TBC should have a giving number so church is able to send a receipt after the end of each tax year. These receipts can be used to claim a rebate on charitable giving provided for by the NZ government. Those who wish to can allocate this rebate to church. This can increase the size of your gift to church by 33% each year.

Contact the church office for a giving number or for more information on how to claim and allocate your tax rebate to TBC.

