

# Saddle Up 101

## Lesson Two: What about the Church?

### Why the Church?

When people hear the word church, what are some things that come to mind?

In the Bible the word for church is the word for ‘gathering’, ‘assembly’, or ‘called out ones’. It is referring, not to a building, or an organization, but a group of people. According to the Bible, then, a church is a **group of God’s people**.

The Bible also makes it clear that God wants you to be a part of a church – a group of God’s people: **“For you are a member of God’s very own family, you belong in God’s household with every other Christian...”** (Ephesians 2:19) **God wants His people to be in relationship – with Him – and with each other...**

### The First Church

**A description of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church – Acts 2:41-47**

... “those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. **(Membership)** They spent their time learning from the apostles, **(Maturity)** and they were like family to each other. They broke bread together and prayed together. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the Lord’s followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. **(Ministry)** Day after day they met together in the temple, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God **(Magnification)** and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.” **(Mission)**

### About the Cowboy Church of Erath County

**Our Vision:** Our vision is that this church would fill a void in the world around us. That void is the lack of outreach to the men and women of the Western Heritage. We desire to see all who are lost found, our heart beat, however, is for those lost somewhere horseback or sitting on a tractor. Our vision is that the men and women of this culture would experience a spiritual revival in their hearts that would awaken the community around them. We also vision ourselves helping start many more western heritage churches around this great state and country we live in.

**Our Purpose:** The Cowboy Church of Erath County exists to fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ to the men and women of the Western Heritage by:

1. Bringing people into a real relationship with Jesus Christ **(Evangelism)**
2. Growing people in their relationship with Jesus Christ **(Maturity/Discipleship)**
3. Meeting the needs of people and the community **(Ministry)**
4. Experiencing the presence of God **(Worship)**
5. Pursuing real relationships with each other **(Fellowship)**
6. Extending the kingdom of God locally and around the world **(Missions)**

## **Our Values:**

1. We value real relationship with God – hearing from and obeying Him.
2. We value real relationships with people in the community.
3. We value full devotion to Christ as the reality for every follower of Christ to pursue.
4. We value the western heritage expression of timeless truth in our worship and communication of God's word.
5. We value purpose driven ministry.
6. We value a kingdom mindset that sees our ministry as part of what God is doing worldwide.
7. We value honoring the Lord through excellence in all we do. I said excellence, not perfection!
8. We value the New Testament pattern of servant leadership of Pastors and others God calls to lead.

## **Our Strategy:**

1. Weekend Worship experience of the timeless message of Christ in The Cowboy Way.
2. Sunday School classes for all ages.
3. Saddle Up Process that helps every member and partner in ministry grow.
4. Discovering Real Relationships with those around us.
5. Real ministry events and structures that meet real needs in the community.

## **Our Structure:**

1. Leadership (decision making) and ministry structure are unified – those who serve also lead.
2. Inverted Pyramid of servant leadership, the Pastor and Lay Pastors, and Ministry Leaders serve, equip, and lead.
3. Decision making led by Pastor, shared with Leaders, confirmed by the body; all under Christ.

## **What We Believe**

### **Essentials**

These essentials must be affirmed for membership.

### **The Bible**

The Bible (66 books of the Old and New Testaments) is God's Word. It is the written revelation of God to us and our only source for belief and living. It was written by human authors supernaturally inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is truth without any error.

**2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Ps. 19:7-13; Ps. 119; Mt. 24:35; Mt. 5:18; Jn. 17:17.**

### **God**

There is one true God who is Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three distinct and co-equal personalities; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is all-knowing, all powerful, and everywhere present at all times. He is perfect and unchanging in all his attributes: Loving, Merciful, Kind, Good, Holy, Just, Faithful, and True.

**Gen. 1:1; Mt. 28:19; Psalm 139:1-12; Is. 6:1-7; Psalm 136; 1 John 4:8; Romans 8:14-16.**

### **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. He is the only begotten Son of God. He has existed eternally. He was born to a virgin and lived a sinless life. He died on the cross for the sins of the world and was raised three days later to demonstrate His power over sin and earth. He ascended to heaven and will return to rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

**Col. 1:15-20; 2:9; John 1:1-5; Mt. 1:22-23; Is. 9:6; Heb. 1:1-3, 2:18; 4:14-15; 2 Cor. 5:21;**

**I Cor. 15:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 17:14; 19:11-6**

## **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world and in the life of all believers to convict mankind of their need for Jesus Christ and the Truth of God's Word. He brings power for living, ministry, and witnessing to those He indwells. He gives and empowers spiritual gifts to all He indwells.

**Jn. 14:16-17; Ro. 8:9; 1 Cor. 2:12; Jn. 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22-25**

## **Man**

Human beings are made in God's spiritual, moral, reasonable, and emotional image. Mankind is the supreme creation of God, created to know, love, and be like God in character. Every Human is precious and valuable to God from the moment of conception. However, sin entered the human race through Adam. Sin corrupts us all and leads us into sinful acts. Sin separates us from God and from eternal and abundant life. Every person is separated from God by the sin nature and by choice. **Genesis 1:27; Ps. 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23**

## **Salvation**

Salvation is by God's grace, accepted by faith alone. By trusting Christ and His death on the cross as the full payment for our sin, we are saved as we turn from sin to Him. Salvation is given by the grace of God and cannot be taken away. Our security is rooted in the power and promise of God who is faithful. We are completely forgiven and completely right with God from the moment of salvation.

**Eph. 2:8-9; Romans 6:23; Jn. 14:6; Romans 5:1; 8:1, 38-39; Titus 3:5; John 3:16; Eph. 1:13**

## **Baptism**

Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ that symbolizes our identification with His death, burial, and resurrection. As such it is reserved for those who have expressed their desire to be followers of Jesus Christ. Baptism is by immersion in order to illustrate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

**Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 18:8; 1 John 2:3; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41**

## **Security and Perseverance of Believers**

Those who have truly placed saving faith in Christ are born spiritually and are kept secure by the promise and power of God. Their security is not based on their continued self effort. While true believers may from time to time fall into sin or out of fellowship and ministry because of neglect of their spiritual life or other circumstances, the reality of their salvation will be shown by positive response to the loving discipline of Christ and the church. All who are truly saved will persevere in their faith in Christ until the end.

**Romans 8:38-39; John 10:28-29**

## **Non-essentials**

### **Everything else!**

Non-essentials must not be allowed to bring us into division and distraction. We choose instead to focus on Christ, unity in Him, and ministry together.

## **About Our Affiliation**

Our main identity is that we are a 21<sup>st</sup> century Western Heritage Church; that is, our highest loyalty is to God and His Word. We have chosen to affiliate with the Texas Baptist/ BGCT (Baptist General Convention of Texas) for four reasons:

- (1) They have been instrumental in raising financial support
- (2) The cooperative mission endeavors allow us to have a great part in world-wide ministry
- (3) Our doctrinal statement is in agreement with the historic denomination positions on essential matters-this gives us our foundation to build from
- (4) BGCT (Baptist General Convention of Texas) churches are autonomous. They voluntarily choose to cooperate.

