

*Man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and by God's grace put saving faith in Christ. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple.*

## **The Village Church Statement of Faith**

### **Calvinism**

Labels are often unappealing and divisive. When used to stereotype or oppress, classification is inherently evil. However, on some issues, designation can be quite beneficial in regards to understanding distinctive elements. For example, if you were going into inner-Africa to do ministry, it would certainly be helpful to know the various peoples to whom you would be ministering. Knowing which languages you will encounter, various worldviews, etc. are of definite importance in this instance. In light of this second use of labels, we unabashedly ascribe to the label of Calvinistic.

Calvinism is an attempt to systematically classify and interpret the doctrines of grace as presented within Scripture. It is also known as Reformed theology due to its prevalence among all of the major players of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, including John Calvin, the one after whom the system is named. Calvinism is typically distinguished from other understandings (most common Arminianism, after Jacobus Arminius) by five main doctrines, which are collectively known as the five points of Calvinism. These doctrines form the acrostic TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

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