

## Site Visit 1

Calvary Community Church is an urban church located at 1575 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, NY 11233. It is two blocks from Eastern Parkway. The interview was conducted with their Bishop, Martin Nelson. The Calvary Community Church congregation started with a mixed multitude, including many ex-offenders. These men were either on parole, just completing parole, or just released from prison. They groomed them to re-adjust to life in their communities to be productive citizens. They consider this a redemptive experience to see the Grace of God on display, using these people to establish His work. The congregation remains multiethnic.

There are much more young people than seniors attending this church. The age range is between nine and forty. The dress code is more relaxed—clean casual. The seniors, however, often wear traditional clothing—hats, long skirts, suits, etc. The worship style is a mixture of traditional and contemporary. Their Theology is conservative, and the philosophy is based on a Pentecostal/Evangelical model. The leadership/discipleship model is based on internal training. That is, assigning young people to specific leadership positions in order to grow. They also sponsor persons to get higher education. For example, one of their members recently graduated from Alliance University and is now the administrator.

On Sundays, services are held in the morning as well as in the evening. Based on my observation from my visit, the church is large and could host about 400 persons at any time. They have a lot of land space. The service usually lasts for one hour. One observation is that the persons in attendance were primarily people of color. You could hear hallelujahs, handclapping, amens, yeses, and laughs—typical of the urban church.

Calvary Community Church's core values are that prayer comes before anything else, people matter, servant leadership, to remain open to a fresh move of the Holy Spirit, to seek to

discover and release everyone in their assignment from God, and to bring hope to the hurting. They believe the Bible is inspired by God, without error, and the authority on which we base our faith, conduct, and doctrine. In one God who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood for our sins and that salvation is found by placing our faith in what Jesus did for us on the cross. They believe in water baptism which is an act of obedience. They also believe in the regular taking of Communion to remember what the Lord Jesus did for us on the cross.

Calvary Community Church is very active in its community. The church works with and supports Anchor House and Teen Challenge substance abuse program. They coordinate with Jews for Jesus ministry and work closely with the local precinct. They also do pantries once per month. During the pandemic, Calvary Community Church was a source of food distribution. They are also a part of the Clergy and Police coalition. In addition, they provide youth counseling and music and drama lessons for children.