

# Chris Calvert



*Michele and Chris*

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## **Ministry Mission**

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God has called me to serve Him by leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. My years of experience in teaching and senior leadership provide a strong foundation for serving as a lead pastor of a mid-to-large-size church or as an executive/senior associate of a larger local congregation.

## **Ministry Perspective**

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I believe that the church exists to exalt God and help people live fully for His glory. Our mission is to reach people and help them become wholehearted followers of Christ through biblical training and the power of the Holy Spirit. A healthy church will have a good balance between worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and equipping. This balanced approach to ministry creates an atmosphere that is inviting to the lost and uplifting to believers.

## **Personal Background**

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### **Overview**

I was born and raised in Spokane, Washington. Michele and I celebrated our 26th Wedding Anniversary this year and have three children: Charis, Cady, and Connor (all in their early 20s). Michele was born in Atlanta, Georgia and was raised just outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee. We met in seminary, got married in Dallas, lived in Yakima, Washington for sixteen years, and have been in Fresno, California for nine years.

### **Conversion**

Growing up in a strong Christian home, I came to trust Christ as my personal Savior at an early age. Through meaningful times of recommitment, that decision has been affirmed a number of times over the years.

### **Family**

Both of my parents were strong followers of Jesus and made sure we had a strong biblical foundation. Our family life was deeply affected when, at the age of eleven, my older sister died quickly of cancer. While our family clung even closer to God in the midst of this tragedy, it made the indelible impression on me that life is valuable, time is fleeting, and helping people understand and embrace the gospel is all important.

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## Personal Background continued

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### **Family continued**

During my formative school years, I was very active in sports and school activities. Between my ninth and tenth grade years, I moved from a small Christian high school to a large public high school where I didn't know anyone. Once again, I threw myself into sports and activities and was eventually chosen to lead our student body as president.

I worked my way through college and seminary by working for companies that installed telephone and computer networks for various businesses. I started out as a cable-puller and eventually became a project manager.

Michele and I met when she came to seminary from Tennessee to pursue her Master of Arts in Christian Education, which she received in 1991. We volunteered in ministry together, spent time with the same group of friends, dated, and got married in 1993. Michele worked from home as a professional writer and editor when the children were young. These days Michele works as an office manager for a water brokerage company and also as an associate technician doing writing and editing for a local engineering firm.

### **Hobbies and Interests**

Most of my free time these days is spent with my family—with “empty nest” rapidly approaching, we spend as much time with the kids as possible. This includes hiking, jogging, camping, swimming, biking, or just watching movies with them at home. Among my favorite things to do on a day off is to spend time with Michele, work on house projects, and spend time with our kids. I also enjoy golfing and mountain climbing. I have completed a couple of half-marathons, summated Mount Hood, Mount Adams, and have climbed Half Dome in Yosemite a few times.

### **Education**

After earning my Associate's degree at a local community college, I transferred to Eastern Washington University and received a degree in education and my teaching credentials. I delayed attending seminary for two years in order to gain some “real world experience” working in telecommunications and to save money for graduate school. I graduated with honors from Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) with a master's degree in theology (Th.M.). This is a full-time four-year degree that required rigorous study in Greek, Hebrew, Systematic Theology, and Pastoral Ministry.

### **Calling**

During and after my college years, I prayed much about God's direction for my life. My employment in the telecommunications industry was successful and rewarding, and I had good prospects for a successful career there, but I decided to pursue full-time ministry instead. A couple of years after being in full-time ministry, while attending a ministry conference, I sensed the unmistakable confirmation that God had called, prepared, and equipped me for ministry. My ordination to the gospel ministry took place at Memorial Bible Church in May of 2003.

Michele's story is similar. After she graduated from college, she took a missions trip to Spain. While there, she was deciding whether to pursue the medical field and take over her father's medical clinic in Tennessee, continue in communications, or go to seminary. Traveling on a bus in the middle of the Spanish countryside, she committed to pursue ministry as a life calling.

### **Ministry History**

During my college years, I started a campus ministry at my local community college and then was on the InterVarsity Leadership Team for campus ministry at Eastern. This is when I sensed that God was directing me toward full-time ministry.

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## Personal Background continued

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### **Ministry History continued**

While in seminary, I got heavily involved in inner-city ministry near the school. This included moving into an inner city apartment and using practical help to meet the desperate needs of those in the neighborhood. I began and led an outreach program there, targeting inner-city youth.

After completing my seminary degree, DTS asked me to join their staff as an Admissions Counselor where I worked to recruit new students and represented DTS in the national evangelical community. I greatly enjoyed this position as it involved nation-wide travel, counseling, and challenging people to follow God with their whole heart!

In 1994, Memorial Bible Church called me as their associate pastor. I was responsible for adult education, assimilation, outreach, small groups, and children's ministries. As the church grew, I took on many more areas of responsibility including staff oversight, board training, pastoral care, leadership development, strategic planning, spiritual formation, and facility development.

In 2010, The Bridge Church called me as their Executive Pastor. As with most executive pastor roles, my ministry assignments varied based on the needs of the church at the time, but my primary responsibilities circle around staff oversight, ministry alignment and planning, finances, and new ministry initiatives. While my ministry responsibilities have grown and changed over the years, they have always been marked by biblical training, leadership development, team ministry, a commitment to equipping people for ministry, and a determination to reach the lost.

In 2014, the Bridge's lead pastor resigned, so I was asked to step in as Interim Lead Pastor over two years while the church searched and located the new Lead Pastor. I've stepped back into the executive role since his arrival.

## Formal Education

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Dallas Theological Seminary (1988-1992)  
Masters of Theology (Th.M.), *Cum Laude*

Eastern Washington University (1983-1985)  
Bachelor of Arts in Education (B.A./Ed)

Spokane Falls Community College (1981-1983)  
Associate of Arts (A.A)

## Continuing Education and Certifications

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### **Continuing Education**

As a lifelong learner, I have gleaned much from conferences, such as Rooted Intensive, EFCA XP Gatherings, Catalyst, the Willow Creek Summit, Promise Keepers Clergy Conference, National Pastor's Conference, the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, and Executive Pastor's Seminar. I find that some of my best learning has come from training resources and informal interactions with fellow pastors who are with me "in the trenches" of ministry. I look forward to continuing my education and training through an effective Doctor of Ministry program in the future.

### **Past and Present Certifications**

- Walk Thru The Bible Old Testament Instructor
- Associate of Christian Schools International Teacher and Administrator
- Washington State Professional Education—Initial Secondary Teacher and Renewal
- SONLIFE Youth Discipleship and Evangelism Course
- PREPARE/ENRICH Professional Counselor

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## My Personal Ministry Values

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- **A passionate love for Jesus and others:** The purpose of the church is to show God's greatness by rescuing lost people and helping them become wholehearted Christ followers who fall passionately in love with Him. This love for Jesus motivates us to serve Him and graciously extend His love to others.
- **A wholehearted reliance on the Bible:** Scripture is God's written Word and the authoritative guide for what we think and what we do. We do what God says to do, and we don't do what God says not to do. Having said that, in most areas God has given tremendous freedom . . . and responsibility . . . to choose the most effective way to carry out what He has given us to do.
- **A heart for lost people:** I am passionate about helping lost people come to know Christ. The church and every believer in it must be externally focused and constantly seeking ways to reach friends, family, and a world of lost people who are far from Christ.
- **A commitment to effective ministry:** The church must use creative, effective methods to reach today's post-Christian world. This includes the emotionally charged area of music. I believe it is the responsibility of mature Christians to be flexible as it relates to the music and methodologies they prefer for the sake of reaching younger generations and the lost.
- **Empowered volunteers:** The pastor's job is to equip people for service to the Lord. The church must be built upon motivated and equipped teams of volunteers who exercise their gifts in carrying out the great commission. If the pastor is busy "doing ministry work" rather than training leadership teams and casting vision, he is violating his scriptural mandate.
- **Strong leadership development:** The church rises and falls on volunteers and leadership. Leadership development is the lifeblood of a serving, thriving church. The church must be marked by constant and intentional leadership development at all levels.

## Ministry Experience

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### The Bridge Evangelical Free Church, 2010-Present

Fresno, CA

*Executive Pastor*

The Bridge Evangelical Free Church in Fresno, California is a racially and socio-economically diverse congregation that hosts three English speaking gatherings, one Spanish speaking gathering, and one ASL (Deaf) gathering each week, as well as a dynamic Celebrate Recovery ministry of 300-400 weekly.

My primary responsibilities revolve around oversight of 30 paid staff, ministry alignment and planning, new ministry initiatives, teaching, and spiritual formation.

### Memorial Bible Church, 1994–2010

Yakima, WA

*Associate Pastor*

I was hired as an associate pastor when the average attendance was just over 250. Our strong pattern of growth over the sixteen years (attendance of 700+) gave me an excellent opportunity to grow and mature as a church leader. In addition to my regular responsibilities, I focused on developing and overseeing a proactive assimilation strategy and restructured our local and global outreach teams.

### Dallas Theological Seminary, 1992–1994

Dallas, TX

*Admissions Counselor*

Upon graduation from seminary, the school asked me to represent them to prospective students and the evangelical community. While I enjoyed the position very much, my deep desire has always been to serve the local church.

### Open Doors, 1987–1988 (five months)

China

*Missionary*

As a young man, I was deeply touched by the story of "God's Smuggler" — Brother Andrew. So, before I went to graduate school, I served with this ministry to closed countries in the Far East.

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## Ministry Skills

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### Leadership

My twenty-five years of multiple-ministry responsibilities have sharpened my abilities in leadership, administration, teaching, and pastoral ministry. I have a unique ability to envision and implement practical strategies and systems to help move people forward in their walk with the Lord. The following examples demonstrate some of my leadership abilities and experience:

- *Led and coached staff of 40 including hiring, supervising, evaluating, and releasing individuals*
- *Designed and led yearly elder and staff offsite planning/training and spiritual life retreats*
- *Directed a church-wide spiritual-growth campaign with over 1200 participants*
- *Fully redesigned and reenvisioned children's ministry programming and facilities, resulting in quadrupled numbers of volunteers and children in attendance*
- *Led a six-month church-wide programming and facility strategic planning process with over 150 leaders*
- *Formulated and implemented our church-wide spiritual formation process which includes adult education classes and small group programming*
- *Designed and led leadership development process to prepare over 50 men for leadership on our Elder Board and in other ministries*
- *Designed and implemented a four-step assimilation process moving over 400 adults into the church family*
- *Guided multiple building renovation projects and directed the funding campaigns*
- *Individually disciplined and trained over 80 leaders through personal/group discipleship processes*
- *Oversaw our financial system, including the implementation of regular external audits.*
- *Provided oversight and guidance to family ministry teams*
- *Provided community-wide leadership for multi-church marriage standards agreement*
- *Prepared, implemented and oversaw annual budgets of up to \$3,000,000, including weathering the recession of 2008*

### Teaching

I teach the Scriptures on a regular basis and enjoy seeing God's people grow in their faith as a result of clear, practical, understandable Bible teaching. I've filled the pulpit on a semi-regular basis (depending on the season of the church's life), and my enthusiasm for the Scriptures gives me an eagerness to open the Word of God for others. I also regularly teach Bible and ministry courses, including a variety of basic spiritual growth and church-engagement/leadership courses.

### Evangelism

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and equipping others to present the gospel is a passion of mine. My giftedness in this area is evident as I have led many others to Christ and trained believers to do the same. One of my ministry highlights is training people how to share their faith with their family and friends. Personally, I am committed to building genuine friendships with people far from Christ.

### Preaching

I normally preach six to eight Sunday mornings per year (three services each Sunday) to a congregation of 1400. On occasion I have done an extended series. Expository preaching is my preferred method where I explain the text clearly while applying it in a practical and direct way. My gifts in this area have been regularly affirmed.

### Missions Experience

I've directed our missions teams at both churches and have served as team pastor on many short term missions trips over the years. This includes trips to Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, and Mexico. In years past, I took high school teams to Europe two consecutive summers (Royal Servants, 1986 and 1987) and served five months as a missionary with Open Doors in China in 1987-1988.

#### ❖ **A Unique Situation**

Memorial Bible Church was unique in that the Lead Pastor lost his voice three months after I arrived and was only able to speak in a whisper. As a result, the majority of pastoral ministry, such as conducting weddings and funerals, were my responsibility.

#### ❖ **Another Challenging Situation**

I was asked to take on the responsibilities of the Lead Pastor for over two years while The Bridge searched and located our current Lead Pastor. I led a preaching team, preaching only once or twice a month, while shouldering all the other lead pastor and executive pastor responsibilities.

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## Local Community Leadership Experience

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- Active Band Boosters Member
- Local Swim Team Board Member
- Youth Sports Coach
- School District Strategic Planning Committee Member
- Public School Continuing Education Instructor

## Spiritual Giftedness

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- Teaching
- Leadership
- Administration
- Evangelism
- Service
- Wisdom

## Personality

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- **DISC**—Dominance, Steadiness, Influencer, Conscientiousness
- **Strengths Finder**— Harmony, Belief, Responsibility, Significance, Focus
- **Meyers-Briggs**— ESTJ: The Executive; ISTJ: The Logistician (Internal/External split)
- **Enneagram**—9w8

## Leadership Style

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My leadership style is more democratic than dictatorial. I prefer to lead through consensus, but recognize that there are times, when after significant discussion, a decision needs to be made. In those instances, I feel comfortable making that decision.

## Websites

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- **The Bridge Church Website**—[www.thebridgefresno.com](http://www.thebridgefresno.com)
- **Memorial Bible Church Website**—[www.mbcyakima.com](http://www.mbcyakima.com)

## References

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References, doctrinal statement, and ministry philosophy are available upon request.