



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
WATER BAPTISM
POSITION PAPER

POSITION P-3
Adopted: 3/10/07
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1. When someone decides to repent and believe and follow Jesus they should be baptized in water. It should be performed as soon as reasonable after their decision. This divinely ordained ceremony expresses and confirms their new relationship with Jesus and His body. Baptism is to Christian life as wedding is to marriage. (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 8:12-16, 34-40, 10:47-48, 16:29-34; Luke 23:39-43)
2. Baptism in the Bible and in the early church was by immersion. We believe it best to follow biblical example unless there is good reason not to. Immersion is the only mode that expresses the believers' identification with Jesus' death and resurrection. Therefore that mode will be the practice of our church. (Mark 1:9-11; Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:1-5; *The Didache*)
3. Because Jesus commanded baptism and because baptism was the universal practice for new believers in the Bible, we ask all who have not yet been baptized and desire to be identified with this local church, to express their obedience by being baptized by immersion prior to being welcomed into the membership of the church (except in cases of medical or physical impossibility).
4. For those who have been baptized by a mode other than immersion after their salvation, we encourage them to be baptized by immersion, but do not require it. As they describe their baptism we will ask them to clarify why they were baptized by the other mode. If being baptized a second time by immersion would violate their conscience or in some way diminish their previous act of obedience, then their prior baptism will be accepted.
5. Baptism will be done under the oversight of a pastor. The person who performs the baptism, chosen by the supervising pastor in consultation with the person being baptized, will normally be a person who has had a significant role in the person coming to Christ. Performing the baptism is not an Elder specific role, so it is not gender specific. The one doing the baptism will be coached carefully to ensure appropriate practice.
6. We may give an invitation for baptism during a baptismal service. That invitation would be in the context of the clear presentation of the gospel and given to any adult (college or older) who has decided to follow Jesus and has never been baptized. People who are high school age or younger would need to have parental permission. An Elder or pastor will meet the person to hear their decision to follow Jesus. The Elder/pastor will shepherd the person wisely, including deferring baptism if it is not appropriate.
7. Baptisms could occur away from the church campus if there is a pastoral presence and adequate planning. The pastor would ensure that it is a genuine decision to follow Jesus, not just an emotional response. Anyone high school or younger would be baptized only with parental permission. Typically a report would be given to the church either by the person baptized or the pastor so the whole church can share in the encouragement.