

WATER BAPTISM AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A scriptural inquiry into the relationship of water baptism to church membership, and consequently proving by scripture and reason that water baptism does not result in church membership.

For almost the first two years of my ministry (October, 1984 through June, 1986), I taught frequently that a scriptural baptism required a proper result - addition to a New Testament church. (See Appendix A, which was the outline I used with baptismal candidates during that time.) I assumed this position and taught it, because I myself had been taught it prior to my ordination (July, 1984). Accordingly, I believed by previous teaching that when water baptism occurred the candidate automatically and consequently became a member of the visible assembly and the Holy Spirit simultaneously added the subject to the spiritual union of the church.

When qualifying baptisms from other churches, I generally made a subjective decision with the candidate regarding the probability of that church being in the lineage of New Testament churches. I believed I was responsible to determine by faith whether each church in question traced its lineage to the Reformation or to the apostles. Since baptism resulted in church membership, I believed I needed to establish the legality of the baptism by checking the historical lineage of the church in question. Never did I understand any need to determine whether the receiving church or the performing minister believed that baptism resulted in church membership. I simply understood my duty to determine • the probable historicity of that church.

As is often the case, a particular concept or practice is not fully understood until one is forced by necessity to defend its validity and its logical consequences and implications. Ordination may give a man the authority to exercise his office, but the work of the ministry forces him to study and defend his teaching and actions far more seriously than what occurs before ordination. It has been said that it takes a little knowledge to believe something, more knowledge to teach something, but a great deal of knowledge to defend something. Consequently, men will often have reason to change their position on a subject after being forced to evaluate it under the pressure of a challenge. While ministers are instructed to hold fast what they have been taught, the apostolic injunction is limited to the "faithful word" they have been taught (Titus 1:9).

Being forced by a challenge to more fully develop the concept of church membership, I found myself running into considerable difficulties, if I continued to maintain that baptism was the act that added a convert to a local church. It was easy to see that membership rather required mutual consent and submission between the receiving congregation and the person seeking membership as the means for addition. Having initiated my first complete study of the relationship between baptism and church membership (June, 1986), I realized I held a position that I did not understand and could not defend. The following material presents the results of my study on this subject.

Noble readers will consider this material in its entirety before drawing any conclusions, and they will read, study, and prove it with a ready and receptive mind (Acts 17:11). Truth is not too complex for average saints to hear, understand, and believe (Ps 119:130; Prov 8:8-9; II Cor 11:3). Be confident in God's ability to give you understanding to know the truth regarding this simple subject (Job 32:1-10; Psalm 119:98-100; Eph 1:17-18; James 1:5). Prove all things (I Thess 5:21); take nothing for granted. Avoid any philosophy or tradition of men (Col 2:8). And that God will grant every sincere reader an understanding of these things is my prayer.

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I. The Doctrine of Local Church Membership Should Be Established Positively From Scripture.

- A. The definition and nature of a church is important before considering its membership.
1. A church is a congregation (Psalm 22:22 cp Hebrews 2:12; Exodus 12:3 cp Acts 7:38).
 - a. Congregation. A collection of persons into one group or body, or their assembly.
 - b. It is not a mysterious entity with some mysterious relationship to Christ but a group of individual disciples of Christ distinguished from all others.
 - c. We must distinguish between a congregation, an assembly of that congregation, and the mere building or place where that congregation assembles.
 - d. Are these considerations important? Are women forbidden to speak in a building, an assembly, or the congregation? How does the Holy Spirit dwell in a church? Does He dwell in a building? Does He dwell in the assemblies? Or does He dwell in the collective group of members? Does He dwell in the members individually?
 - e. The word "church" can easily apply to the members of a local congregation, the building in which religious worship occurs, the entire redeemed family of God, the nation of Israel, the kingdom of God, etc. Confusion surrounding this word has probably led to more erroneous church doctrine than any other single source.
 2. A church is a specific number and group of persons segregated from all others by voluntary association and agreement and collective judgment.
 - a. Members of one church are not members of any other church (Colossians 4:9,12).
 - b. Members are created by group action (Mat 18:17; Ac 9:26; Rom 14:1; I Cor 5:13).
 - c. Any person can be specifically identified as in or out of the church (I Cor 5:12).
 - d. Any attempt to form a new church from a group of baptized converts makes these points manifestly clear. More on this point will follow in the outline.
- B. The local church is a group of baptized believers that are bound together into one body.
1. They are bound by one mind and faith (Acts 2:42-47; I Cor 1:10; Ephesians 4:3-6).
 2. They are bound by mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:1-4; I Peter 5:5).
 3. They are bound by charity and peace (Ephesians 4:1-3,16; Colossians 3:12-15).
 4. They are bound by the Lord's Table (I Corinthians 5; 10:16-17; II Corinthians 6:14-17).
 - a. The Lord's Table is the focal point of church membership - it is the acid test.
 - b. The Lord's Table is called the communion of the church for it represents the common union of the congregation, which obviously requires mutual agreement and submission (Amos 3:3; I Corinthians 10:16-17; II Corinthians 6:14-16).
 - c. Each communion requires congregational judgment as to acceptable participants.
 - d. Acceptance at the table or rejection from it is plainly a congregational judgment.
 - e. The body of members comprising a church of Christ is visibly, specifically, necessarily, and primarily made manifest at the Lord's Supper.
 - f. Since participation at the Lord's Table is by mutual consent and agreement, and since church membership is directly related to and reflected by the Lord's Table, then church membership must be by mutual consent and agreement.
 5. They are bound by congregational judgment (Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 6:1-8).
 6. They are bound by pastoral judgment (I Thess 5:12-13; I Timothy 5:17; Heb 13:7,17).
 - a. Church membership assumes submission to the church's pastor as its given ruler.
 - b. God made David king, but Israel also made him king by agreement (II Sam 5:1-3).
 7. The binding nature of these aspects of church membership requires obvious mutual consent by the two parties involved (Amos 3:3). These two parties are the individual seeking membership in the church and the church receiving the individual. They both must understand, accept, and agree upon the terms of such membership. Such public commitment to the Lord and to the body requires more than water in a baptism.
 8. The purpose of the local church is the synergistic strength found in a society of individuals (I Sam 23:16; Prov 27:9, 17; 30:27; Eccl 4:9-12; Eph 4:16; Heb 10:24-25).
 9. Therefore, a local church is a group of Christ's disciples voluntarily joined together practically for mutual strength and encouragement in gospel duties. It is not a mysterious body of spiritual union apart from or superior to this practical union.

- C. Joining and separating from a local church requires the individual's voluntary action.
1. Addition occurs when the bonds of submission are acknowledged (Acts 2:42; 9:26).
 - a. No one is forced into a church; no one becomes a church member against his will; no one becomes a church member without the strong desire to be one; no one becomes a member without knowing and agreeing to what is required; and no one wakes up to find himself a member by some mysterious effect of baptism.
 - b. A person must make application to be received into the fellowship of a church, since membership does not occur by some Divine willy-nilly allocation of converts.
 - c. The 3000 additions at Pentecost accepted the bonds of apostolic fellowship by obvious implication. And be it known that their repentance and faith necessary for baptism were not nearly enough to qualify for apostolic fellowship (2:44-45).
 - d. Paul accepted the bonds at Jerusalem and assayed to join membership with them. (Assay. The action or process of trying. A trying to do something, an attempt.) He obviously stated (1) his conviction that God was in them (I Cor 14:25), (2) the facts of his recent conversion and baptism at Damascus, and (3) his desire to join membership with them at Jerusalem.
 - e. Public profession is part of this admission (I Cor 14:24-25; He 10:23-25; Ac 9:27).
 - f. Agreement and consent must be acknowledged in some public fashion (Amos 3:3).
 2. Separation occurs when the bonds of mutual obligation are broken (II Thess 3:6).
- D. Receiving and excluding members from a local church requires the church's action also.
1. Addition occurs when the church voluntarily receives an applicant (Acts 9:26-28).
 - a. A church is not required to receive any applicant into membership where they have doubts regarding his conversion. This same process is followed in the restoration of an excluded brother - the church must be satisfied with his repentance before they have any obligation to restore his membership.
 - b. Paul was not received as a member at Jerusalem until Barnabas (a previous member at Jerusalem) had confirmed his conversion, because the saints at Jerusalem were not convinced by Paul's testimony that he was sincere.
 - c. An addition cannot occur without the specific approval of the existing members.
 - d. Paul instructed the church at Rome to receive the weak carefully – without doubtful disputations about matters of liberty (Rom 14:1). Such reception by the church obviously requires church discretion and judgment.
 - e. The fornicator was received again by simple church consent (II Cor 2:6-8).
 2. Separation occurs when the church rejects a member (I Cor 5:11-13; II Thes 3:14-15).
 - a. Exclusion - opposite of reception - is executed by many (I Cor 5:4; II Cor 2:6-8).
 - b. Exclusion changes one's status by the action of the church (Matthew 18:15-17).
- E. All societies or organizations require the mutual assent of the body and the applicant.
1. Marriages, nations, and businesses among other organizations require such assent: spouses, citizens, and employees all enter and participate in these relationships by voluntary submission.
 2. Even a family relationship assumes agreement and submission, for children of age could and do often leave where these two things do not exist.
 3. Agreement is essential for membership otherwise there could be no unity (Amos 3:3).
 4. Requiring a condition for membership is the right of any organization (Ex 12:43-51).
- F. The formation of a new congregation from baptized converts makes these points clear.
1. The specific individuals that will make up a new church must be determined by some process of mutual agreement and submission. Twenty baptized converts, some members of other churches and some members of no church, must individually apply for and receive approval for membership.
 2. The bonds of membership i.e. assemblies, faith and doctrine, responsibilities, communion, judgment, pastor, and so forth must be agreed upon by the intending individuals before a church can even begin to exist. The individual members must agree to form a body - a body does not simply evolve without their mutual consent and agreement.

II. The Nature of Water Baptism Should Be Established By Comparison with Church Membership.

- A. Baptism is an individual ordinance, but church membership is a congregational ordinance.
1. Baptism is the answer of one good conscience toward God (I Peter 3:21; Luke 7:29).
 - a. Baptism is an answer to God: it is not a request to or an agreement with others.
 - b. Baptism justifies God: it does not justify or exonerate a congregation directly.
 - c. It is an ordinance of identity - of one conscience - with the Person of Christ.
 - d. Baptism is of repentance, not of communion. It manifests individual repentance.
 - e. The eunuch's faith alone was the necessary condition for his baptism (Acts 8:37).
 - f. The only other conscience even related to the event is that of the administrator who must administer the rite (Matthew 3:7-12; Acts 8:37).
 - g. There is no case in scripture where other consciences judge a baptism (Acts 10:47 is obviously rhetorical by comparison with 11:17).
 - h. The design and purpose of baptism are clearly taught in scripture, and the lack of any reference to a relationship with membership is quite conspicuous.
 2. The Lord's Supper - the essential and central aspect of church membership - is an example of a strictly church ordinance (I Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:20,33).
 - a. It is an ordinance observed with others and for others beside one's own self - it is the common union of the body (Luke 22:15; I Cor 10:17; 11:33; II Cor 6:14).
 - b. It is observed when the members of a congregation come together (Acts 20:7).
 - c. A collective decision is required for inclusion and exclusion (Ac 9:26; I Cor 5:8).
 - d. It is an ordinance of unity - of common union - relating to the Person of Christ.
 3. Christ's order of evangelism is teaching about Jesus, then baptism, and then teaching all other ordinances including church duties (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:5,35; 17:18).
 - a. Those totally ignorant of church doctrine can be baptized (Acts 2:37; 8:38-39).
 - b. Duties toward a local church are taught after baptism (Acts 2:14-36; 8:29-35).
 - c. The record of evangelism in Acts precludes even the possibility of know ledge of or consent to church membership on the part of many baptized converts.
 4. Since baptism is an individual ordinance between a repenting sinner and God, then it cannot result in church membership which requires congregational action.
 5. Since baptism is an individual ordinance, and church membership is by mutual consent and commitment, then baptism cannot be the means of addition to the local church.
 6. Water baptism is the evidence and sign of repentance and the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38), not the instrumental cause of church membership.
- B. Baptism is a ministerial ordinance, but church membership is a congregational ordinance.
1. Baptism is administered by one teacher of the gospel executing immersion (Acts 8:38).
 2. A gospel minister approves candidates for baptism, not churches (Matthew 3:7-12; 28:19-20; Acts 8:12,36-38; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:29-33; 19:1-7; Titus 1:5).
 3. The ordination of another minister is an example of a strictly ministerial ordinance that does not involve church approval or administration (I Timothy 5:22; II Tim 1:6; Tit 1:5). Each minister is responsible only to God for any men he might ordain.
 - a. The qualifications and initiatory event are given to ministers (I Tim 3:1-7; 5:22).
 - b. Churches submit to pastors, but they do not give authority or ability to a man.
 - c. The only man qualified to judge potential ministers is responsible to ordain them.
 4. Those that require baptism to be a church ordinance make New Testament evangelism impossible without inventing an "arm of the church" or some other absurdity, because those first baptized evangelistically in order to form a church are obviously baptized without church authority or approval. But Christ's true ministers are able to function fully with all gospel authority without church approval or authorization.
 5. Those who would put all the ordinances and their administration in the church deny that Jesus Christ gave authority to His servants (Mark 13:34; Ephesians 4:8-12). They usually abuse Matthew 28:19-20 to teach that all authority is in the church.
 - a. If churches control the gospel authority of a minister, then he is a neutered puppet with the delegated authority of a Prince Charles, that is to say, with no authority. Jesus Christ and His ministers are not so confined by churches.

- b. According to this theory, by obeying His Captain and withdrawing from a wicked congregation, he loses his authority to baptize, form churches, ordain ministers, and command gospel duties.
 - c. And by remaining with an obstinate congregation in order to preserve his authority, he may be restricted in some other aspect of his duties.
6. The differences between congregational rule and ministerial rule in a New Testament church are seen with this issue. A church no more governs itself than a flock of sheep. Flocks of sheep have shepherds, and churches have pastors. As families have fathers, churches must have rulers (I Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17; Hebrews 13:7,17).
- C. Baptism is a figurative ordinance with symbolism totally unrelated to church membership.
- 1. Baptism is a figure or likeness of three things unrelated to church membership.
 - a. Baptism symbolizes Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Ro 6:3-5; I Pet 3:21).
 - b. Baptism symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to holiness (Romans 6:4).
 - c. Baptism symbolizes our hope of resurrection from the grave (Ro 6:5; I Cor 15:29).
 - 2. There is nothing in the symbolism of baptism that is related to church membership.

III. The Baptismal Theory of Church Membership Must Be Denied By Scripture and Reason.

- A. The scriptures neither teach, imply, hint, or imagine that membership is by baptism.
- 1. Scripture teaches both water baptism and church membership, but it does not teach anywhere the essential relationship of cause and effect.
 - a. Our opponents are required to provide scriptural proof of a causal relationship.
 - b. Simultaneity is not the issue here, because they claim cause and effect; but even simultaneity cannot be established even remotely from scripture.
 - c. Since the nature of these two ordinances is so different and the acts and teaching of the apostles do not support their hypothesis, their burden of proof is very heavy.
 - 2. Doctrine must be established by the best evidence available, not by weak and faulty inferences that contradict the clear and reasonable teaching and practice of the New Testament. We must prove all things, not believe and hope all things. Charity is perfect for personal relationships, but it is not valid for establishing doctrine.
 - a. Inductive reasoning with fallacious general principles that are not exclusive in their conclusion is an example of exceeding poor reasoning.
 - b. God's word is plain (Prov 8:9). It will not be confusing to an enlightened mind.
 - 3. Water baptism is the baptism of repentance, not the baptism of church membership.
 - 4. It is a manmade doctrine, since the scriptures are silent regarding any connection.
- B. Church membership may be changed or lost without any affect on a man's water baptism.
- 1. Transferring from one congregation to another simply requires consent, not rebaptism.
 - 2. Exclusion and restoration to a church simply requires general consent, not rebaptism.
 - 3. It is gratifying to see our opponents admit mutual consent as the basis for every other church relationship or change in relationship. Consistency is what they need!
 - a. Their use of I Corinthians 12:13 must rely on mutual consent as the initiating action rather than baptism in every church relationship after the first one.
 - b. How does the Lord add members to a church when they join by transfer? Are they already members of the church on a higher, spiritual level? How does He function without baptism? Can the Lord add in some way other than baptism? Does the addition actually have nothing to do with baptism?
 - c. The lack of scriptural evidence to assume any different process regarding one's first church relationship leaves their inconsistency a glaring fault. If mutual consent is necessary for a second church relationship (Acts 9:26-28), then certainly the initial relationship requires it. If there ever was a case calling for arguing from the lesser to the greater, this is it.
 - d. Two different churches are two different bodies. The members of one body have no relationship to the members of another body. Let plain scripture be brought forth showing some "church" relationship that includes all the churches of Christ.
 - 4. There is no relationship between the natures of these two very different things.
 - a. Baptism is figurative of death and resurrection; membership is practical reality.
 - b. Baptism is individual and personal; membership is congregational and corporate.
 - c. Baptism is of personal identity with Christ; membership is of unity with others.

- d. Baptism is administered ministerially; membership is administered corporately.
- C. Baptisms without any immediate church affiliation are illustrated repeatedly in scripture.
1. John the Baptist baptized many (Matthew 3:1-6), while Christ spoke of His church as still future (Matthew 16:18). There were no local assemblies as we read of in Acts prior to Pentecost, therefore baptism was certainly not by church authority, and neither did it result in church membership.
 2. There is no church mentioned in any sense relative to the baptisms of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:10-22), Cornelius (Acts 10), and the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:19-40).
 - a. Those at Jerusalem or Samaria would have been quite opposed to the eunuch's membership. Can you imagine what the saints and apostles who contended with Peter about baptizing Cornelius would have done if lowly Philip had told them they had a new church member that was a castrated black Gentile? They would not take Paul, but some assume they would have jumped up and down with joy over the eunuch's membership. What would they have done with Deut 23:1?
 - b. Philip did not even return to either of these churches or cities to report their new member (Acts 8:40; 21:8), and the eunuch never even thought about telling them himself. (For his own joy, it was good that he did not.) The Spirit tells us he went on to Ethiopia rejoicing, and that without a church. It is impossible for Jerusalem or Samaria to have known of this baptism, for Cornelius was the first Gentile convert they knew about (Acts 11:1-3,18-19; 15:6-7).
 - c. The absolutely staggering example of the eunuch cannot be ignored or wrested. It is a landmark in the acts of the apostles and manifests the true nature of scriptural baptism and its separation from church membership. This baptism was identical to those administered by John, but its timing after Pentecost gives it validity for our dispensation even to those who might question John's baptism.
 - d. Those at Damascus had certainly not consented with Saul of Tarsus for membership prior to his baptism by Ananias. Membership came later; it could not have resulted from his baptism. The man was a known public enemy of Christians, and the fellowship of a body of Christ requires more than water to soothe the fears and doubts of rational saints.
 - e. What church approved the baptism of Cornelius? What church had Cornelius as a member the split second he parted the waters? Jerusalem called Peter on the carpet for the matter. Mutual consent obviously follows baptism in such cases.
 - f. The ignorant jailor heard of Jesus Christ and was baptized within one hour, and the brethren in Philippi were not even available until later (Acts 16:30-40).
 3. The "time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:10) cannot be used as an escape without plain proof to do so. First and second generation baptisms are not differentiated.
 4. The "argument from silence" used properly only strengthens the case for our doctrine.
 - a. The scriptures are silent regarding baptismal membership, so we certainly should not assume it against this silence and against the many instances of baptism without membership.
 - b. The scriptures are not silent regarding the mutual consent implicit in membership and the specific illustration of Paul assaying to join at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26).
 - c. There is absolutely no basis whatsoever to argue against the silence of the eunuch's baptism and joyful journey back to Ethiopia where he belonged.
- D. Reason forces us to deny the baptismal theory of church membership or create conflict.
1. Nature, logical reasoning, and common sense are able to teach certain basic points of truth. Men do not need scripture to know that women are preferable to men for a sexual relationship (Romans 1:26-27). Men do not need scripture to know that long hair on men is shameful (I Corinthians 11:14). In this last case, Paul even argues from the premise that men know this aspect of truth by nature. The same source of knowledge teaches about fire, heights, water, etc. And it should be obvious from natural reasoning that communing together in a voluntary society requires the mutual consent and agreement of the individuals comprising that society.
 2. If baptism is an individual ordinance, and baptism adds one to the church, then taking a vote of consent of the rest of the congregation is a worthless exercise. If so, then Jerusalem was out of bounds in rejecting Paul by their vote (Acts 9:26).
 3. If baptism is the means of church membership, and mutual consent is required for membership, then the church must consent with an unbaptized person for membership.
 - a. Where in the world is the logic of such foolishness? Do churches consent with unbelievers on the condition they believe? Is an offer the same as consent?
 - b. Where are the examples of candidates getting church permission for baptism?

4. If the eunuch was added to the church at Samaria by Philip's baptism, did they know they had a black member? a castrated member? did he commune with them? did he submit to their pastor? did he review the character of their members? did they exhort one another daily? did they mutually share joy and suffering? were they of one mind? did he rebuke those in error? did he transfer to the church in Ethiopia? did Philip ever inform them of their addition? did they confirm his repentance of extortion in Ethiopia? did he confirm their rejection of Simon the sorcerer?
 5. The proponents of the baptismal membership theory are not even sure how one becomes a church member. Does God Himself infallibly and automatically add the baptized person to the number upon baptism? Or must the church add the person by mutual consent and agreement within the same day (Jewish or Roman) of baptism? Is it God or the church that does it? Is it the result of baptism or a necessary addition to baptism? Using their definitions, these two methods are not the same.
 6. What validates the "proper result" of a baptism? Is it the faith of the receiving church? Is it the faith of the administrator? Is it the faith of the subject? Is it the faith of the receiving church and the administrator? Is it the faith of the administrator and the subject? Is it the faith of the receiving church, the administrator, and the subject? Or is it the "proof" of God doing it in Acts 2:38-47 without the faith of any participants?
 7. The scriptural and reasonable and practical and profitable concept of membership is destroyed when baptism is made the means of it.
 - a. Membership becomes a mysterious and "spiritual" relationship apart from its practical value based on the communion and fellowship of a functioning body.
 - b. The scriptural aspects of membership i.e. communion, considering, provoking, loving, admonishing, comforting, warning, weeping, burden bearing, mutual care and rejoicing, utilization of gifts, and so forth are minimized or destroyed.
 - c. Such churches create members by baptism that are members only in some theoretical, mysterious, "spiritual," way - they have absolutely no edifying role in the church; in fact, they are often totally unknown to the congregation! Membership becomes a name on a roll or church directory without the duties and benefits assumed in the New Testament of a closely knit fellowship of saints striving together for the edification of the body. The depraved Roman church is the great leader in this practice, but many other churches including Baptists continue to emulate her.
- E. The baptismal theory of church membership originated in Rome as part of her erroneous church doctrines.
1. When considering this point, it is important to remember two things. First, a doctrine is not proved false exclusively by association with Roman Catholic theology. But, second, it is important to appreciate God's words that Rome is the "mother of harlots AND ABOMINATIONS of the earth.
 2. My Catholic Faith states, "A person becomes a member of the Church upon receiving Baptism" (page 1 02). "The effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism are that we become members of the Church, subject to its laws, and capable of receiving the other sacraments. By Baptism we become members of the Church and children of God" (page 269).
 3. The Catholic Encyclopedia states, "Baptism, one of the Seven Sacraments of the Christian Church, frequently called.... the 'door of the Church'" (Volume II; page 258). "This sacrament is the door of the Church of Christ and the entrance into a new life" (Volume II; page 267).
 4. The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent declare, "If any one saith, that the baptized are freed from all the precepts, whether written or transmitted, of holy Church, in such wise that they are not bound to observe them, unless they have chosen of their own accord to submit themselves thereunto: let him be anathema." And The Catholic Encyclopedia states of these anathemas, "The doctrines here condemned by the Council of Trent, are those of various leaders among the early reformers." Thus, we have good evidence that some reformers or believers outside of Rome rejected baptism as the "door of the Church" and taught some other process.
 5. Baptism resulting in church membership is closely connected (frighteningly close) to baptismal regeneration. When gospel ordinances are given mysterious properties to cause other spiritual and practical benefits, sacramentalism is not far away. Even a superficial study of Roman Catholic theology and the Protestant creeds will make this point all too clear.

IV. Arguments Used to Teach the Baptismal Theory Must Be Honestly Answered and Explained.

- A. It is argued that the gift of the Holy Ghost at baptism is church membership (Acts 2:38).
1. A proponent of the baptismal membership theory claims that the "whole issue really hangs on Acts 2.37-47 and "the critical thing to understand in Acts 2.37-47 is the gift of the Holy Ghost promised upon baptism." And again, "In summation, the whole thing hangs on Acts 2.37-47 especially with regard to the gift of the Holy Ghost promised in vs. 38-39.11 In regard to these verses, he states, "As we follow the narrative, we look for what happened to those who were baptized in order to ascertain this gift of the Holy Ghost. Verses 41 & 47 show us: they were added by the Lord to the church. • • • This gift of the Holy Ghost is being added by Him to the body WITHIN which He ministers."
 2. Such an argument requires a subjective-genitive use of "the gift of the Holy Ghost." This point is extremely significant and bears important hermeneutical consequences to any serious Bible reader.
 - a. A subjective-genitive use means that some gift is given by the Holy Ghost, Who is acting as the subject of the giving; that is, the Holy Ghost becomes the giver of some other gift not defined in the verse. The Holy Ghost is no longer the gift, but He becomes the giver of some other gift.
 - b. An objective-genitive use means the Holy Ghost is the specified gift; that is, the Holy Ghost is the object of the giving. The Holy Ghost is understood to be the gift given by God to those that are baptized.
 - c. Once the subjective-genitive sense is forced on the text, then church membership is assumed to be the referenced gift given by the Holy Ghost upon baptism. Read the quotations again that are given above to confirm this line of reasoning. The theory reads as follows: Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of church membership from the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is not the gift; church membership is the gift; the giver of church membership is the Holy Ghost.
 - d. Scriptural examples of prepositional phrases requiring a subjective-genitive sense determined by context are Daniel 11:37; Haggai 2:7; Galatians 2:16; James 2:4; and I John 3:16. In each case the object of the preposition is the subject of the genitive phrase.
 - e. Scriptural examples of prepositional phrases requiring an objective-genitive sense determined by context are Luke 11:42; I Timothy 3:6; I Tim 6:10; James 2:1; and Jude 21. In each case the object of the preposition is the object also of the genitive phrase.
 - f. As with many constructions, the sense of the context determines the grammar.
 3. Scriptural comparison requires rather an objective-genitive sense of this phrase; that is, the Holy Ghost is given by God as the gift to those who repent and are baptized.
 - a. The O.T. prophets prophesied that God would give His Spirit, but they did not prophesy that the Spirit would give membership in a New Testament local church.
 - (1) Two principal prophecies among others are obvious references to God pouring out the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 12:10).
 - (2) The promise is objective-genitive: God would give the Spirit as the gift.
 - b. The great prophet of the reformation, John the Baptist, also prophesied that God would give His Spirit through Christ (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Observe how John describes the giving of the Spirit as a baptism. The water no more does the baptizing in what John spoke of than the Spirit does the giving in what Peter spoke of. John requires an objective-genitive sense in Acts 2:38.
 - c. Jesus promised His Father's gift of the Spirit to believers before His crucifixion (Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; 14:16-17,26-27; 15:26-27; 16:7; Acts 1:4-5,8).
 - (1) The Holy Spirit was to be given only to believers that believed on Christ.
 - (2) The offer of the Spirit to believers was made universal by "If any man thirst."
 - (3) The offer of the Spirit to believers was made conditional by the same words.
 - (4) The Holy Spirit was to be given after Jesus Christ was glorified in heaven.
 - (5) The Holy Ghost Himself was to be given: it was not the Holy Ghost giving.
 - (6) God the Father was committed to give another Comforter, even the Spirit.
 - (7) The Holy Spirit thus given was to have an internal relationship in believers.
 - (8) The Holy Ghost was to be sent by the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - (9) The Holy Ghost as the Messenger of Peace was given by Jesus to believers.
 - (10) Jesus promised to give the Spirit, which came from the Father, to believers.
 - (11) The Holy Ghost could not be given to the saints until Jesus Christ departed.
 - (12) The Holy Ghost was specifically described as a promise and a gift from God.

- d. Peter's exhortation in Acts 2:38 is the perfect fulfillment of these promises.
 - (1) The disciples waited for the promise of the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5,8).
 - (2) Peter credits their tongues to the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 16-18).
 - (3) Peter concludes his sermon by identifying Christ's glorification, His authority to dispense the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Holy Ghost, and the actual giving of the Spirit to the believers (Acts 2:33).
 - (4) The gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:38 fulfills both Joel 2:28 and John 7:39.
 - (5) Peter added that the promise (of the Spirit being given) was to all (Ac 2:39).
 - (6) Peter quickly taught that God had given the Spirit to the obedient (Ac 5:32).
 - (7) To confirm apostolic authority, they gave the Spirit at Samaria (Ac 8:14-19).
 - (8) The churches of Judea thereafter had the promised Comforter (Acts 9:31).
 - (9) To confirm Gentile conversion, God gave Cornelius the Spirit (Acts 10:43-48).
 - (10) Peter recognized the giving of the Spirit to believing Gentiles (Ac 11:15-18).
 - (11) Peter plainly describes at an important church council that Cornelius received the Holy Ghost as the gift promised to believers (Acts 15:7-9).
 - (12) Do not miss the repetition of the promise, the timing after exaltation, the necessity of faith and obedience, and the Holy Spirit Himself as the gift.
 - e. Paul knew this gift to be the Holy Spirit from God as Comforter for believers.
 - (1) He expected believers at Ephesus to have received the Spirit (Acts 19:1-6).
 - (2) Paul specifically taught that the Spirit was given to believers (Eph 1:13-1"4).
 - (3) He repeats God's gift of an earnest and seal (II Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph 4:30).
 - (4) He understood this gift to have been conditioned on faith (Galatians 3:2-5).
 - (5) He taught that Jesus Christ had to die for the promise to be given (Ga 3:14).
 - (6) Paul understood the Spirit to be the believers' Comforter (Rom 5:5; 8:14-17).
 - (7) He also knew that the early believers had the firstfruits (Romans 8:23).
 - f. The gift of the Holy Ghost promised upon baptism must be objective-genitive: it is God's giving of the Holy Ghost through Christ to the followers of Christ.
4. The gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:38 is God's giving of the promised Comforter.
- a. At water baptism in the name of Jesus, the answer and obedience and proof of faith (John 7:39; Acts 5:32; 8:37; 15:7-9; I Peter 3:21), God gives the Holy Spirit to His obedient saints in fulfillment of His promise.
 - b. The earnest and seal of a believer is the Spirit Himself, not church membership.
 - c. Various supernatural gifts accompanied and manifested the Spirit's presence generally (I Cor 12:4-11), on the apostles particularly (Mark 16:19-20; Acts 1:8), and in unusual situations requiring special confirmation (Acts 2:1-21; 10:44-48).
 - d. Speaking in tongues and other miraculous signs and wonders were not THE gift but manifestations of the gift (Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 12:4; Hebrews 2:4).
 - e. Samaria received the Holy Ghost well after baptism to confirm the apostles (Acts 8:14-19); Cornelius before baptism to confirm Gentile conversions (Acts 10:43-48; 11:15-17; 15:7-9); and the disciples of John after hearing of Christ (Acts 19:1-6).
 - f. This gift is no more limited to local churches than the prayer of Luke 11:13 is limited to local churches. God gives His Spirit to individual men.
 - g. Individual church members may be walking in the Spirit with full spiritual blessings, while the church considered at large is grieving the Spirit. On the other hand, a church may be receiving the blessing of God's Spirit while some members are walking in the flesh. Relations with the Spirit are not dependent on the church. Sinful members or sinful churches cannot take away your personal gift from God (Revelation 3:1-4).
 - h. Those who limit the Spirit's presence to local church members must hold that obedience to the Spirit in withdrawing from an evil church results in losing the Spirit. (If they do not hold this, then they must create some "exception" clause.)
5. Cornelius gives us an excellent example of the gift of the Spirit upon baptism. The gift preceded the baptism, not because it was a different operation of the Spirit, but because the apostles needed special confirmation of Gentile conversions.
- a. The Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and the other Gentile converts (Acts 10:44).
 - (1) It was not the Holy Ghost pouring church membership on Cornelius, but God pouring the Holy Ghost on them. Acts 2:38 must be objective-genitive.
 - (2) Observe that the Spirit was poured on those that heard the word (Eph 1:13).

- b. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon Cornelius and his company (Acts 10:45).
 - (1) The Holy Ghost Himself was poured out; He did not pour church membership.
 - (2) The Holy Ghost was poured ON the Gentiles, rather than the Gentiles being poured into a church.
 - (3) This pouring out of the Spirit was the GIFT of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).
 - (4) This pouring out was the same the apostles received by virtue of "also."
 - (5) This gift of the Holy Ghost occurred after a short message regarding the Person of Jesus Christ. There is no record of church doctrine being taught.
 - c. The giving of the gift to Cornelius was manifested by the tongues (Acts 10:46).
 - d. Peter ordered Cornelius to be baptized for he had received baptism's gift (10:47).
 - (1) Cornelius received the Holy Ghost; he did not receive church membership.
 - (2) The gift Cornelius received was the same gift the apostles had received.
 - (3) But notice particularly the automatic connection with baptism. The presence of the Holy Spirit and baptism go hand in hand, just as Peter had taught earlier (Acts 2:38). Church membership is absolutely and totally out of the picture. Let God be true.
 - e. The Holy Ghost, not church membership, fell upon Cornelius and his company (Acts 11:15). This construction requires Acts 2:38 to be objective-genitive.
 - (1) It was the same event that took place with the apostles on Pentecost.
 - (2) It occurred as he began to speak the gospel of Christ, which was well before he worried about teaching them church doctrine.
 - f. The experience of Cornelius was the fulfillment of Christ's ministry (Acts 11:16).
 - (1) He was baptized with the Holy Ghost, not by the Holy Ghost as in much wrested I Corinthians 12:13.
 - (2) John's prophecy and Christ's promise were fulfilled in this gift of the Spirit.
 - g. Cornelius received the same gift as the Jews after believing upon Christ (11:17).
 - (1) God gave the gift of the Spirit; the Spirit did not give church membership.
 - (2) It was a gift of the Spirit that was associated with believing (John 7:39).
 - (3) It requires an objective-genitive sense on Acts 2:38 as the rest of Scripture.
 - h. God gave the gift of the Holy Ghost to Cornelius to prove his faith (Act 15:7-8).
 - (1) It was the same gift given the same way as what had occurred to the Jews.
 - (2) It was God giving the Holy Ghost. Get this. The Spirit did not give anything. Scripture knows of no gift from the Spirit upon faith or baptism.
 - (3) The Spirit's presence (as a witness) is a seal of authenticity or ratification that one is God's own (II Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).
6. Jesus received the personal ministry of the Spirit at His baptism (John 1:32-34; 4:34). How differently should we be treated? As the sons of God, are we subject to the whims of a congregation affecting our relationship with the Spirit of God?
7. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing IN THE HOLY GHOST (Romans 5:5; 14:17; 15:13; Galatians 5:22), though he was not a member of any church (Acts 8:39). And the Philippian jailor was rejoicing with the same gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 16:34).
- B. Since 3000 were added the same day, some conclude baptismal membership (Acts 2:41).
- 1. A proponent of the baptismal membership theory states, "Those who were baptized at Pentecost were added 'the same day' to the church (ACT 2:41-42)." And again, "The Lord adds them the same day they are baptized (ACT 2:41)."
 - 2. The text does not come close grammatically, contextually, or imaginatively to prove any causal relationship between these two very diverse events.
 - a. The natural reading of "and the same day" actually implies two separate events chronologically, not the same event or consequential or simultaneous events.
 - b. The following context (2:42-47) describes the nature of their addition, and it is not related to baptism in any way. It is continuing in agreement and submission with the apostles in a conforming corporate relationship.
 - c. Assuming a causal relationship here is a serious non sequitur - cause and effect cannot be proved. Did Noah's 600th year cause the flood (Gen 7:11)? Did the Herodians' questions cause the Sadducees' question (Matt 22:23)? Did Lot leaving Sodom cause the hailstorm of fire and brimstone (Luke 17:29)? Did Christ's healing of the lame man cause the Sabbath to occur (John 5:9)?
 - 3. The text does not come close to even requiring the two events to always occur "the same day." The text is simply an historical record of what occurred that great day.

- a. If we assume baptism and membership must occur the same day from the wording of this text, consistency will require us to baptize the very hour a person first hears the gospel (Acts 16:32-33).
 - b. The text is historical and descriptive; it is not teaching baptismal duties.
 - c. If our opponents had a text like Leviticus 22:30 dealing with the timing of baptism and membership, they might have something to work with. But they don't, and given the finished nature of Scripture they never will.
4. The text cannot even be used to prove that 3000 were baptized that day. Peter and the apostles could have baptized 5000 that day, and the remaining 2000 could have rejected fellowship with the apostles, (2) joined later in the week, (3) or returned to their respective countries (Acts 2:5-11). The text does not even say or imply that 3000 were baptized: it only says 3000 were added to the 120. In fact, the 3000 that were added could have been baptized by John three years earlier. The relationship between baptism and addition to the number of the disciples in this text is so vague that nothing can be proven from it.
 5. The addition of 3000 (a mathematical function) simply increased the existing 120 (a mathematical quantity) to the new total of 3120 (a mathematical quantity).
 6. The "same day" simply designates the day on which 3000 Jews were converted - the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1 cp 2:41). Read and understand. They did not take a week or a month to act upon Peter's convicting message. The day of Pentecost was a very important day in the history of the acts of the apostles and the growth of Christ's kingdom.
 7. How the Lord adds to the church is a question that must be understood beyond mere words. When addition by the Lord is understood, baptism is left where it belongs.
 - a. God adds members to a local church, not by some mysterious operation triggered by baptismal waters, but by providentially bringing converted elect together according to His will for membership by mutual assent (Acts 11:21; 16:14; I Cor 3:5-9; 12:18). This is the only way God can add a person to a church in the practical sense. God cannot make a person a church member - the church itself is alone capable of this responsibility. In this way the scriptures speak of believers being added to the Lord (Acts 5:14; 11:24). The "adding" of Acts is simply a descriptive way to describe the growth and increase of the number of the disciples from 120.
 - b. God adds members to a local church by baptizing them into the spiritual union of the church (I Cor 12:13), and this divine operation is consequential to the church receiving them. The reverse of this operation is when God leaves a disobedient member to the punishment of Satan when the church calls for it (I Cor 5:4-5,13).
- C. Inductive reasoning is appealed to as the means by which baptismal membership is proved.
1. "Argument #1: In Matthew 28:19-20 those who are baptized are to be taught to observe all things which Jesus commanded. These things include instructions for behavior in the church. Baptized persons out of the church could not observe all things Jesus commanded. The baptized believer must obviously be in a position to observe all things that Christ commanded... Can't you see from this how the very aim of baptism is church membership? If baptized believers do not become church members, then we cannot even obey the commission as Christ delivered it! ... This is a powerful point."
 - a. This same reasoning "powerfully proves" that baptism also results in persons becoming married (I Cor 7:10), needing to marry (I Tim 5:14), having children (Eph 6:4), and having a criminal record of theft (Eph 4:28), etc. Obviously Jesus intended His apostles to teach obedience to commandments that apply.
 - b. Scriptural examples of evangelism by the apostles do not even imply that knowledge of church doctrine and duties existed at baptism (Acts 8:35-38). In fact, in many cases of baptism, the situation precludes such knowledge.
 - c. One of the things that ought to be taught after baptism is the importance of joining with other disciples of Christ in a local assembly. This argument poses no problem whatsoever, and it does not even make sense.
 2. "Argument #2: In Acts 2 those who were baptized were added the same day to the church."
 - a. They also heard speaking in tongues and Peter's powerful sermon the same day.
 - b. Events occurring the same day neither imply cause and effect or simultaneity.
 - c. Events occurring the same day historically do not require the same day later.
 - d. The text does not say that those who were baptized were added the same day: it states that (1) those who gladly received the preaching of Peter were baptized and (2) about 3000 joined the Jerusalem Church.
 - e. The importance of "the same day" is simply to focus attention on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1).
 3. "Argument #3: The Lord adds to the church such as should be saved. Baptized believers should be saved according to Mark 16:16... The word 'should' is the past tense of the word 'shall'. Inasmuch as baptized

believers shall be saved, whenever they are baptized they should be saved. Since baptized believers should be saved, then God adds them to the church according to ACT 2:47. There is NO 'maybe' about it. According to this verse, there is no way you can divorce baptism from church membership. This is so clear!"

- a. Baptized believers SHALL be saved, not SHOULD be saved; and their salvation is obviously conditioned upon further obedience after baptism.
 - b. Should is not the past tense of shall. Shall. 2. In general statements of what is right or becoming: = 'ought'. Now obsolete. (Superseded by the passive subjunctive should: see sense 18.) 18. In statements of duty, obligation, or propriety (originally, as applicable to hypothetical conditions not regarded as real). This conditional form of expression was from an early period substituted for the unconditional shall in sense 2, and in modern English the present tense in this use is obsolete, and should = ought to.
 - c. Does this reasoning guarantee baptized persons to endure to the end (Mat 24:13)? Or does it guarantee that church members shall endure to the end?
 - d. Why cannot Mark 16:16 be linked the same way to Matthew 1:21 to teach that baptism washes away sins? Since Jesus SHALL save His people from their sins, and baptized believers SHALL be saved, then baptism SHALL result in salvation from sins. Neat, right? Acts 22:16 would even help this connection a little more by giving it a direct confirmation based on primary definitions.
 - e. If the salvation of Mark 16:16 is the salvation of Acts 2:40, then we know clearly that much more was required than just baptism and church membership.
 - f. If the salvation of Mark 16:16 is the salvation of I Peter 1:5, then we still know clearly that much more was required than just baptism and membership.
 - g. If the salvation of Mark 16:16 is the salvation of I Peter 3:21, then we still know clearly that much more was required than just baptism and membership.
 - h. There is no mysterious salvation that occurs in church membership simply taken.
4. "Argument #4: Gentile believers became partakers of the very same thing we find Jewish believers partaking of in Acts 2. See Romans 11:17-23 and Ephesians 3:6."
- a. What this has to do with the matter at hand is impossible to ascertain right now.
 - b. Both Jews and Gentiles must be baptized in the name of Jesus to answer God.
5. "Argument #5: Those whom the Holy Spirit places into the body of Christ are also made to drink into one Spirit according to I Cor 12:13. This drinking occurs upon coming to Christ, according to John 7:37-39, which involves obedience. The amount of obedience required is given in Acts 2:38-39. Upon baptism one begins to drink of the Holy Spirit and is, therefore, also placed by the Spirit into the body of Christ."
- a. It does not follow that the drinking into one Spirit begins at baptism. Acts 2:38 and I Corinthians 12:13 are not necessarily connected. There is no causality or simultaneity required here.
 - b. It does not necessarily follow that the drinking of I Cor 12:13 is the same as the drinking and flowing of John 7:37-39. The Spirit is the Distributor of gifts, but He is also the Comforter; and these distinct operations of the Spirit should not be quickly confused or eliminated.
 - c. The comforting ministry of the Spirit is personal, the drinking here is corporate.
 - d. The intent of this passage is to emphasize the multiplicity of gifts and members in the singular body of Christ by the singular administration of the Spirit.
6. "Argument #6: The visible church is the kingdom of God preached from the days of John the Baptist. Persons have entered that kingdom from that time (Luke 16:16; Matt 21:31-32). What were these persons doing to enter in? They were repenting and being baptized (Luke 7:29-30)."
- a. These verses do not prove that the kingdom and the church are the same thing.
 - b. Baptism is clearly the formal declaration of allegiance to Jesus Christ as King.
 - c. It has been abundantly proved that baptism does not make one a church member.
 - d. Jesus spoke of the kingdom as present and the church as yet future (Matt 16:19).
 - e. The kingdom is always used singularly, while churches are referenced individually.
 - f. What happens when one is not a church member? Is he out of Christ's kingdom?
7. "Argument #7: No other criterion is given in the N.T. whereby persons are to be initially received as members of the church."
- a. This fact is false. Mutual consent must exist for membership (Acts 9:26-28).
 - b. Members are obviously excluded in the exact reverse of their initial reception.
 - c. The matter of criteria is not the issue but the matter of instrumentality.

8. "Argument #8: Hence, in the face of these facts the generalization may be made that persons are added to the local church upon water baptism."
 - a. Inductive reasoning must arrive at a single, clear, EXCLUSIVE generalization that satisfies all the individual facts.
 - b. The conclusion is denied due to false arguments and arguments without proof.
 - c. Therefore, this method of reasoning cannot even come close to proving the point that baptism results in church membership.

- D. Some connect the Spirit's baptism in I Corinthians 12:13 with the gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:38 and the Lord adding to the church in Acts 2:47 to try and make baptism the means of church membership.
 1. Water baptism is by a minister; this baptism is by the Spirit. They are not the same. There is no necessity to make them consequential, simultaneous, or even related.
 2. This passage's context is corporate union and the unifying work of the Holy Spirit in making the many members of a church into one profitable body (I Corinthian 12:4-27).
 - a. Given the great emphasis on spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church (I Cor 1:4-7), Paul attempts to correct their division and envying over such differences that were made among their members by God (1:10-11; 3:3; 4:7).
 - b. Paul uses chapter twelve to establish the Divine origin of spiritual gifts (12:1-3).
 - c. Paul uses chapter twelve to teach the Source of these gifts to be One (12:4-6), and so they ought not to be schismatic in their relationships to one another.
 - d. Paul uses chapter twelve to teach the sovereign choice of God in distributing the variety of spiritual gifts according to His own will (12:7-11).
 - e. Paul uses chapter twelve to compare the church of the Corinthians to a human body in its multiplicity of members but its singularity of purpose (12:12-27).
 - (1) The human body is composed of many different parts with different functions, but they are all actuated by one soul and for the overall benefit of one body (12:12). The churches of Christ are the same: they have many different members in one body.
 - (2) As the multiple members of the human body receive vitality and purpose from a singular source - the human soul, so the church of Christ receives vitality and purpose from a singular Source - the Spirit of God (12:11,13).
 - (3) "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free;" describes the operation of the Spirit in creating a body of Christ. The Spirit plants, immerses, or sets every member into the body of the church. A church of Christ is a singular body by virtue of the singular Spirit that places each member in the body. How do various independent converts become a single body of Christ? By this baptism - or immersion - of the Spirit.
 - (4) This baptism by the Spirit is the operation of God setting the various members in the body according to His own pleasure (12:18). It includes God's providence in the timing and location of conversion, submission to the body, particular care for the body, spiritual gifts, etc. Paul's point is the binding together necessary for multiple individuals to become a singular body.
 - (5) "And have been all made to drink into one Spirit" refers directly to the singular Source of vitality for a church of Christ. As drink provides nourishment for each individual part in a human body to contribute to the overall health of the body, so the Spirit provides spiritual gifts and graces to every member as He will to contribute to the overall health of the church.
 - (6) This unity of the Spirit that binds together the many members of a church must be preserved by the church (Ephesians 4:3-4; Colossians 3:14-15).
 - (7) The variety of members in a church of Christ with their various gifts is by design of the Creator of the church - the Spirit of God. The body cannot properly exist without all of them, and it is not proper to value any more highly than others. But because God has set each member there according to His pleasure, they should avoid any schismatic divisions.
 - f. Paul uses chapter twelve to confirm God's sovereign dispensing of gifts by their own experience and ranks the gifts at Corinth for their peace (12:28-31).
 - g. Paul then uses chapter thirteen to subordinate the entire lesson of spiritual gifts to the greater lesson of charity - the more excellent way of service.
 - h. Paul then uses chapter fourteen to more specifically teach the purpose of spiritual gifts and the rules for their public use in the churches of Christ.

3. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 3:16) through His presence in their congregation (II Cor 6:16), His presence in their assemblies, and His unifying and edifying affect on their members. But the physical body of a saint is also the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6:19). The personal relationship with the Spirit in our bodies is not dependent on church membership. It is unrelated to a local church.
 4. The rivers of living water spoken of by Christ (John 7:37-39) refer to the personal ministry of the Spirit of God to individual believers regardless of church affiliation.
 5. The Spirit baptizes persons into the church by the same initiative He removes them and leaves them to Satan - by the direction of the church (I Cor 5 cp Mat 18:18).
 - a. The providential work of God in converting particular persons for a church takes place before and outside the work of a church receiving members.
 - b. The participating work of God in which such members drink of the Spirit's gifts and graces takes place after and due to the work of a church receiving members.
- E. Some argue for baptismal membership by making the kingdom and the church identical.
1. If they are precisely the same thing, and baptism was the means for entry into the kingdom, then baptism must be also the means for entry into a local church.
 2. Jesus plainly spoke of the kingdom being present from the time of John (Luke 4:43; 9:27; 13:28; 16:16; 17:21; 21:31), but His local churches had not yet been established.
 3. Baptized believers did enter a kingdom relationship with Christ (Matt 21:31-32; Mark 1:4-5,15; Luke 7:29-30), but where were the local churches we read of in Acts?
 4. Why is the kingdom always spoken of as one and the churches of Christ as many?
 5. What happens to a man between churches? How does he leave Christ's kingdom? If he obeys Christ His King in separating from a disobedient church, does he lose His place in Christ's kingdom?
 6. Entering the kingdom of Christ, or submitting to Christ's authority, is conditioned on the great initial act of obedience to Christ - water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ the King (Acts 2:36-38). But one can serve Jesus Christ with or without a church depending on his individual circumstances.
 7. The kingdom of God is the superset of all those that have actively obeyed God by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Within this superset of citizens of God's kingdom are the individual churches of Christ with their members and those persons not in any particular church.
 8. Any further explanation of this point would require a complete study of the kingdom of God and its relation to the church and churches of Christ. The kingdom of God must be understood in several senses in the Scriptures, but such a study is beyond the scope of this outline.
- F. Some have tried to prove that baptism results in church membership by a connection between Romans 6:3-6 and Hebrews 10:19-25. The argument assumes that the "newness of life" of Romans 6:4 and the "new and living way" of Hebrews 10:20 are the same thing. Then the argument assumes the new and living way to be part of church service. Since baptism initiates the walk in newness of life, then based on the two assumptions already made, baptism must result in church membership.
1. The walking in newness of life is the new and holy conduct that God expects from those regenerated persons identifying with Jesus Christ in water baptism. It is a practical way of life for saints, and it is conditioned upon further obedience.
 2. The new and living way is the free and open access we have to God through the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us. It is a legal benefit of salvation where Jesus Christ forever satisfied God's claims against us, and it is not conditional upon further obedience.
 3. These two concepts cannot and must not be confused or construed as the same thing. They are quite different to any person who reads the context looking for the sense of a passage. One speaks of the desired walk of baptized saints, while the other speaks of the completed offering of Christ under the New Testament.
 4. Furthermore, the new and living way is not part of church service. It is plainly an established relationship with God through the sacrifice of Christ that is open to saints in or out of a local assembly. Paul's later arguments in Hebrews 10 regarding the importance of assemblies are partially based on this benefit of the new covenant, but they do not limit it to the possession of churches.
 5. Such reasoning involves a superficial use of word similarities to try and establish parallels between passages treating significantly different concepts. If such reasoning is valid, the following reasoning is also valid. John 3:5 speaks of a new birth. Birth is the beginning of life. Being born again is the beginning of new life. Romans 6:4 also speaks of this new life. Therefore, John 3:5 and Romans 6:4 must be obvious parallels. And since baptism initiates the new life in Romans 6:4, it must also initiate the new birth in John 3:5. And, of

course, it has the word "water" in it, which is another parallel to baptism. And thus we create the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

- G. Some argue that since Scripture does not describe an intervening procedure between baptism and membership in Acts 2:41, then the argument from silence proves that there is no intervening procedure.
1. When using this argument, they must always qualify membership as the initial entry into the church, since they know that Acts 9:26-28 will leave them naked and ashamed otherwise. Please observe in this reasoning that they grant and assume a universal church relationship entered by baptism, so that every other relationship with a local church is insignificant and unimportant relative to the first relationship, because baptism was the means by which they entered THE church.
 2. The argument from silence cannot be used on a text when the rest of Scripture is not silent regarding the concept taught in the text. Acts 8:38 is silent as to any name or formula used by Philip in baptizing the eunuch, but we know by the force of other Scriptures that Philip baptized him in the name of Jesus Christ.
 3. Acts 2:41 is also silent regarding the source of water the apostles used for the immersions that took place that day. Baptism requires much water, so God assumes that Bible readers will have enough intelligence to assume that such water was found. In the same way, membership requires mutual consent and agreement, so God assumes that Bible readers will have enough intelligence to assume that the 3,000 added on Pentecost desired and consented to membership and were actively received by the existing 120.
 4. The same persons raising this argument will also reason as follows. Membership requires mutual consent and agreement. (This admission usually comes only after realizing that baptism resulting in membership is untenable.) They further reason that Acts 2:41 is silent as to any intervening procedure between baptism and membership. Consequently, they assume a procedure before baptism in spite of total Scriptural silence about such a thing and twenty arguments why it is impossible. Can you imagine the double minded thinking that condemns mutual consent before membership for lack of Scriptural directives and then assumes it before baptism?
- H. Some argue that since the Lord added to the Jerusalem Church DAILY such as should be saved (Acts 2:47), then baptism and membership must occur the same day and not weekly or monthly. If the reader needs an answer to this argument, then he is without hope.

V. The Consequences and Ramifications of the Two Opposing Positions Should Be Considered.

- A. It is impossible to start a new church without denying the baptismal membership theory.
1. Either you must baptize into a holding pattern or into "an arm" of another church.
 2. If there are not enough initially to form a church, you must revert to another one.
 3. If a minister is cast out by a church, he loses his authority to be a minister.
- B. The baptismal theory denies a minister the authority to baptize without church approval.
1. Jesus gave His ministers authority (Mark 13:34; Eph 4:11-15; I Tim 4:1-5; Titus 1:5).
 2. When ministerial authority is relegated to the church, then God's ministers are effectively neutered. The source of this heresy is Rome, but Baptists have subscribed to it. Consider the Landmark and Primitive Baptists.
 3. Baptism is an individual ordinance not related to church authority or approval at all (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:35-38; 9:10-18; I Peter 3:21).
 4. If a minister is without a church, he has authority to baptize and ordain without a church. To hold otherwise denies scripture, creates severe ministerial oppression, and renders evangelism impossible. Churches do not evangelize, baptize, form other churches, or ordain. An "arm of the church" is a caricature of scriptural evangelism not worthy of an intelligent being. Ministers form other churches by Christ's authority, not by the authority of another church.
 5. Scriptural order is the ordination of a minister, baptisms performed by the minister, churches formed by the minister, and other ministers ordained. These duties are ministerial in nature, not congregational. Churches have neither the knowledge nor the authority to administer or approve these ministerial functions.

- C. The result of the baptismal theory is often a church communion unknown in scripture.
1. What kind of membership exists when a person is baptized into a church from a great distance? He has not met the church; the church has not met him; there is no fellowship or communion. It is membership in name only. It is Roman Catholic membership. It is nothing.
 2. Distant nonresident members may never participate in the Lord's supper or fellowship. They are members of the body in name only - they serve absolutely no function and receive absolutely no benefits from the rest of the body, yet it is the drinking of the Spirit in the body that the baptismal membership camp pretends to emphasize.
 3. There is little if any mutual submission, burden bearing, or conversion responsibilities. It is a body the likes of which the world has never seen - members of a body supposedly living totally detached from the body. The trunk may be in one city with arms and legs scattered across the country.
 4. The four benefits of human society taught by God through Solomon cannot be realized by such churches (Eccl 4:9-12). Reward for labor, edification, synergism, and mutual defense are all lost. The purpose of the church is destroyed.
 5. Baptists have generally forfeited their understanding of the true nature of a New Testament church by accepting the baptismal membership theory. Various excesses develop as such churches try to find their purpose for existence.

VI. The Historical Position of Baptists Regarding this Controversy Must Be Considered Wisely.

- A. Whether men can be identified with a given position or not does not make it valid.
1. The truth shall always remain the truth whether men believe it or deny it.
 2. However, doctrinal positions can be taken that subject men to the opinions of the men or churches in their required "lineage." Thankfully, God has not left us to determine a lineage to confirm or refute a particular doctrine or practice.
- B. However, by the nature of the case inherent with baptismal membership, the historical position of a church becomes crucially important.
1. They require a proper result of baptism; that is, that the church administering a previous baptism believes baptism actually does make the candidate a church member. Which in itself creates several interesting considerations. Does the Lord add a baptized person to a church or does the church? What happens if the church doesn't think He adds members upon baptism? What happens if the church does believe it but decides to add them later? What happens if the Lord adds the person to another church that does believe it? Can the church stop God's action by not believing that such actually occurs? Who really cares what another church believes?
 2. Requiring a particular doctrine on the part of churches involved in previous baptisms forces a church holding the baptismal membership theory to hold to genealogies and lineages of local churches by doctrine and practice. And nowhere in scripture is such a requirement even alluded to in the apostles' weakest moments.
 3. If churches in the "lineage" of a baptismal membership church can be proven to have denied this theory, then their baptisms and those following are not legal. It then follows that the baptismal membership crowd has communed with unbaptized persons.
 4. Once the scriptural doctrines of ministerial authority and individual ordinances are recognized, saints and churches can be saved from the pernicious confusion and bondage that results from such a manmade system.
- C. Attached to this outline are transcriptions of works of three very important Baptist ministers in the last three hundred years - John Gill, John Dagg, and B.H. Carroll.
1. John Gill, (1697-1771), was the leading Particular Baptist of his day and seriously flaws any baptismal membership "lineage" descending through the Particular Baptists of England, whether that "lineage" be directly or indirectly affected by this minister.
 2. John L. Dagg, (1794-1884), was an early and very influential Baptist minister and theologian in this country. The Southern Baptist Convention was influenced greatly by his teaching during the late 1800's.
 3. B.H. Carroll, (1843-1914), was the founder and first president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and was also very influential among the Southern Baptists.
 4. Other important Baptist ministers, i.e. John Bunyan, in Baptist history have also specifically denied the baptismal membership theory, but to expand the quotations of this section is beyond the scope of this outline.

JOHN GILL

When covering the nature of a church, he wrote, "A particular church may be considered as to the form of it; which lies in **MUTUAL CONSENT AND AGREEMENT**, in their covenant and confederation with each other... **THIS UNION BETWEEN THEM IS MADE BY VOLUNTARY CONSENT AND AGREEMENT**; a Christian society, or a church of Christ, is like all civil societies, founded on agreement and by consent... As the original constitution of churches is by consent and confederation, so the admission of new members to them, is upon the same footing... And so **ALL SUCH WHO WERE ADDED TO THEM, IT WAS DONE BY MUTUAL CONSENT, AS IT ALWAYS SHOULD BE**; as no man is to be forced into a church, or by any compulsory methods brought into it, so neither can he force himself into one; he has no right to come into a church, and depart from it when he pleases; both the one and the other, his coming into it and departure from it, must be with consent: a man may propose himself to be a member of a church, but **IT IS AT THE OPTION OF THE CHURCH WHETHER THEY WILL RECEIVE HIM**; so Saul assayed to join himself to the disciples, that is, he proposed to be a member with them, but they at first refused him, fearing he was not a true disciple, because of his former conduct; but when they had a testimony of him from Barnabas, and perceived that he was a partaker of the grace of God, and was sound in the faith of Christ, they admitted him, and he was with them, going out and coming in... From whence it appears to be a fact, that it was by consent and agreement that the first churches were formed, as before observed, and not otherwise; and **NOTHING ELSE BUT MUTUAL CONSENT, CAN MAKE A MAN A CHURCH-MEMBER: NOT ... BAPTISM, THOUGH A PRE-REQUISITE TO CHURCH-FELLOWSHIP, DOES NOT MAKE A MAN A MEMBER OF A CHURCH, AS IT DID NOT THE EUNUCH...** Such a mutual agreement is but reasonable; for how should two walk together except they be agreed? Amos 3:3. and unless persons voluntarily give up themselves to a church and its pastor, they can exercise no power over them, in a church-way; they have nothing to do with them that are without, they have no concern with the watch and care of them; nor are they entitled thereunto, unless they submit themselves to one another in the fear of God; they have no power to reprove, admonish, and censure them in a church-way; nor can the pastor exercise any pastoral authority over them, except by agreement they consent to yield to it; nor can they expect he would watch over their souls as he that must give an account, having no charge of them by any act of theirs. Now, **IT IS THIS CONFEDERACY, CONSENT, AND AGREEMENT, THAT IS THE FORMAL CAUSE OF A CHURCH**; it is this which not only distinguishes a church from the world, and from all professors that walk at large, the one being within and the other without, but from all other particular churches; so the church at Cenchrea was not the same with the church at Corinth, though but at a little distance from it, because it consisted of persons who had given up themselves to it, and not to the church at Corinth; and so were members of the one and not of the other; one of you, as Onesimus and Epaphras were of the church at Colosse, and not of another, Col 4:9.,12."

When dealing with the ordinances of divine worship, he wrote, "Baptism must be reckoned one, and is proper to be treated of in the first place; for though **IT IS NOT A CHURCH- ORDINANCE**, it is an ordinance of God, and a part and branch of public worship. When I say it is not a church-ordinance, I mean **IT IS NOT AN ORDINANCE ADMINISTERED IN THE CHURCH**, but out of it, and in order to admission into it, and communion with it; it is preparatory to it, and a qualification for it, **IT DOES NOT MAKE A PERSON A MEMBER OF A CHURCH, OR ADMIT HIM INTO A VISIBLE CHURCH**; persons must first be baptized, and then added to the church, as the three thousand converts were; **A CHURCH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BAPTISM OF ANY**, but to be satisfied they are baptized before they are admitted into communion with it. **ADMISSION TO BAPTISM LIES SOLELY IN THE BREAST OF THE ADMINISTRATOR**, who is the only judge of qualifications for it, and has the sole power of receiving to it, and of rejecting from it; if not satisfied, he may reject a person thought fit by a church, and admit a person to baptism not thought fit by a church; but a disagreement is not desirable nor advisable: the orderly, regular, scriptural rule of proceeding seems to be this: a person inclined to submit to baptism, and to join in communion with a church, should first apply to an administrator; and, upon giving him satisfaction, be baptized by him; and then should propose to the church for communion; when he would be able to answer all proper questions. **SO SAUL, WHEN CONVERTED, WAS IMMEDIATELY BAPTIZED BY ANANIAS, WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF THE CHURCH...**"

When commenting on Acts 2:41, he wrote, "Let the order be observed, they were **FIRST BAPTIZED**, and **THEN ADDED TO THE CHURCH**."

When commenting on I Corinthians 12:13, he wrote, "**NOR DOES WATER-BAPTISM INCORPORATE PERSONS INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**; neither into the invisible church, which is the body of Christ, and here meant; nor into a visible Gospel church-state; they being indeed true believers, and baptized, are proper persons to be received into a

church; but BAPTISM ITSELF DOES NOT PUT THEM INTO IT, OR MAKE THEM MEMBERS OF IT: PERSONS MAY BE BAPTIZED IN WATER, AND YET MAY NEVER BE JOINED TO A CHURCH."

JOHN L. DAGG

When covering the organization of the church, he wrote, "The opinion has been held, almost as a theological axiom, that baptism is the door into the church. It is not the door into the spiritual universal church; for men enter this by regeneration, and are, therefore, members of it before they are fit subjects for baptism. **IT IS NOT THE DOOR INTO A LOCAL CHURCH;** for, though it is a prerequisite to membership, **MEN MAY BE BAPTIZED, AND REMAIN UNCONNECTED WITH ANY LOCAL CHURCH.**"

When dealing with the admission of members into a church, he wrote, "Each church for itself has the responsibility of admitting to its own membership. A single church may exclude from its own fellowship, as in the case of the incestuous member excommunicated by the church at Corinth; and the power to exclude implies the power to admit. The pastor has not the power; nor is it possessed by any ecclesiastical judicatory except the church itself. The church is bound to exercise the power of admitting to membership, in subjection to the revealed will of Christ; and is, therefore, prohibited from receiving any who do not possess the requisite qualifications. **ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP BELONGS TO CHURCHES; BUT ADMISSION TO BAPTISM BELONGS PROPERLY TO THE MINISTRY. A SINGLE MINISTER HAS THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE TO BAPTISM, ON HIS OWN INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY; AS IS CLEAR FROM THE BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH BY PHILIP, WHEN ALONE.** But when a minister is officiating as pastor of a church, it is expedient that they should unite their counsels in judging of a candidate's qualifications; but **THE PASTOR OUGHT TO REMEMBER, THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RECEIVING TO BAPTISM IS PROPERLY HIS.** The superior knowledge which he is supposed to possess, and his office as the shepherd of the flock, and **THE PRIORITY OF BAPTISM TO CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP,** all combine to render it necessary that he first and chiefly should meet this responsibility, and act upon it in the fear of the Lord."

When dealing with miscellaneous topics relative to the church, he wrote, "The **REGENERATING POWER FIRST ATTRIBUTED TO BAPTISM;** appears to have been understood to be the conferring of the new relation **CONSTITUTING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH.**"

B. H. CARROLL

When dealing with the nature of the visible church, he wrote, "Whatever kind or degree of importance may be attached to baptism, one thing is certain: our Lord has placed it at the threshold of church relations. There is no entering the Visible Church without passing through the water of baptism. Men may climb up, or creep in, some other way; but they will succeed only in getting into some other enclosure. All, or nearly all, are agreed that some act called baptism is necessary to church-membership. **BAPTISM DOES NOT OF ITSELF CONFER MEMBERSHIP. THAT, AS WE SHALL SEE, IS DONE BY THE VOTE OF THE PARTICULAR CHURCH TO WHICH APPLICATION IS MADE. THE EUNUCH BAPTIZED BY PHILIP WAS NOT, BY THAT ACT, A MEMBER OF ANY CHURCH.** But no church can dispense with this prerequisite in any case, and admit to its fellowship one who is unbaptized."

THE REQUIREMENTS OF A SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM (A)

"I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."
Psalm 119:128

1. **The Proper Administrator.** Read Matthew 28:19-20 and Titus 1:5. The scriptures require that the man who baptizes be an ordained teacher in the church. This point is easily confirmed by reviewing the record of the early church in the book of Acts. It was only the apostles or other ordained teachers who baptized in the New Testament.
2. **The Proper Subject.** Read Acts 8:36-37; Acts 2:38; and Mark 16:1.5-16. The scriptures teach that an individual to be baptized must first repent and believe the gospel. This requires the subject to be of sufficient age to comprehend the essential elements of the gospel and agree with them. The scriptures know nothing of baptizing infants.
3. **The Proper Doctrine.** Read Acts 8:37; Mark 16:15-16; and I Corinthians 15:1-4. The essential elements of the gospel that must be believed prior to baptism center around the Lord Jesus Christ and His role as the Saviour from sin. He must be believed on as the Son of God. It is the person of Jesus Christ that is the basis of true doctrine.
4. **The Proper Mode.** Read Romans 6:3-.5; Colossians 2: 12; Acts 8:38-39; and John 3:23. Baptism is an immersion of the subject completely under water. This is done to represent (show a likeness of) the burial and resurrection of Christ which put away our sins. As everyone knows, a thing is neither buried nor planted with only a sprinkling.
5. **The Proper Result.** Read Acts 2:41,47; Luke 7:29-30 cp Matthew 21:31-32; and I Corinthians 12:13,27. Baptism must result in a person being placed in the true church or kingdom of Jesus Christ. Since Christ established His church when He was on earth, the true church will maintain by faith a lineage back to Jesus Christ outside the Roman Catholic Church, which the scriptures declare plainly is not a church.
6. **The Relation to Salvation.** Read Hebrews 1:3; 9:14; Titus 3:5; I Peter 3:21. Baptism does not put away sin. It is only a figure of how our sins were put away by Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism is simply an answer and testimony to God for what He did by Himself. It is the answer toward God of a conscience made good by the blood of Christ.
7. **The Faith of Baptism.** Read Ephesians 4:5; Romans L4:23; Acts 17:11-12; I Peter 3:21 cp I Thessalonians 5:21. Each individual is responsible to determine by the scriptures the true gospel and stand fast in it. With a multitude of "churches" offering some type of "baptism" in the name of Jesus Christ it is each man's duty to prove that the doctrine and practice of a church is scriptural before he is baptized in it.

	<u>Administrator</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Doctrine</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Salvation</u>	<u>Faith</u>
Scripture	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roman Catholic	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Episcopal	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Lutheran	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Methodist	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Presbyterian	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Church of Christ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Mormon	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Jehovah's Witnesses	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Pentecostal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

NOTE: To be generous, the benefit of the doubt was given to a group's claims where possible.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF A SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM (B)

"I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."
Psalm 119:128

1. The • Proper Administrator. Read Matthew 28: 9-20 and Titus 1:5. The scriptures require that the man who baptizes be an ordained teacher in the church. •This point is easily confirmed by reviewing the record of the early church in the book of Acts. It was only the apostles or other ordained teachers who baptized in the New Testament.
2. The Proper Subject. Read Acts 8:36-37; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16; and I Peter 3:21. The scriptures teach that an individual to be baptized must first repent and believe the gospel. This requires the subject to be of sufficient age to comprehend the essential elements of the gospel and agree with them. The scriptures know nothing of baptizing infants. The subject of baptism must have an active conscience in order to give answer.
3. The Proper Doctrine. Read Acts 8:37; Mark 16:15-16; and I Corinthians 15:1-4. The essential elements of the gospel that must be believed prior to baptism center around the Lord Jesus Christ and His role as the Saviour from sin. He must be believed on as the Son of God. It is the person of Jesus Christ that is the basis of true doctrine.
4. The Proper Mode. Read Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; and I Peter 3:21. Baptism is an immersion of the subject completely under water. This is done to represent (show a likeness or figure of) the burial and •resurrection of Christ which put away our sins. As everyone knows, a• thing is neither buried nor planted with only a sprinkling. Baptism must provide a figure of the resurrection of Christ, which is only done by immersion.
5. The Proper Design. Read Hebrews 1:3; 9:14; Titus 3:5; I Peter 3:21. Baptism does not put away sin. It is only a figure of how our sins were put away by Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism is simply an answer and testimony to God for what He did by Himself. It is the answer toward God of a conscience made good by the blood of Christ.

	<u>Administrator</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Doctrine</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Design</u>
Scripture	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roman Catholic	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Episcopal	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Lutheran	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Methodist	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Presbyterian	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Church of Christ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mormon	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Jehovah's Witnesses	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Pentecostal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

NOTE: To be generous, the benefit of the doubt was given to a group's claims where possible.