NewSong Church

HARRISON, OHIO

POSITION PAPER

Baptism

Who should be baptized, and how.

OUR POSITION

NewSong baptizes those who have personally professed repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we baptize by immersion.

POSITION PAPER

Baptism

What baptism is

Baptism is the public sign of a believer's union with Christ (Statement of Faith, Article 9). Jesus commanded it as part of making disciples (Matthew 28:19). In baptism a believer pictures what has already happened to him by grace: he has died with Christ to sin, been buried with Him, and been raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:12).

Baptism does not save. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). Baptism is the first step of obedience for someone who has been saved, and the way a believer publicly identifies with Christ and His people.

Who should be baptized

In the New Testament, baptism follows faith. Those who received the word were baptized (Acts 2:41). Men and women were baptized when they believed the gospel (Acts 8:12). The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized after hearing the word of the Lord and believing (Acts 16:32–34).

The 1689 Confession, our doctrinal standard, says it plainly:

> "Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance." (29.2)

How we baptize

We baptize by immersion. The word *baptize* means to dip or plunge, and immersion best pictures burial and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:4). The New Testament describes people going down into the water and coming up out of it (Acts 8:38–39). The Confession states, "Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance" (29.4).

If you were baptized as an infant

Many faithful Christians and churches baptize infants. We count them brothers and sisters in Christ, and our Theological Triage paper places baptism among the second-order matters: important enough to shape a church's practice, but not a test of salvation.

Because we understand baptism to follow personal faith, we do not regard infant baptism as the baptism Christ commanded. If you were baptized as an infant and have since come to faith, we would joyfully baptize you as a believer. This is not a judgment on your parents' love or intentions. It is the step of obedience we believe Scripture calls every believer to take.

Baptism and membership

Because baptism is how a believer first publicly identifies with Christ and His church, NewSong's bylaws require that members “be baptized as a believer” (Article IV, Section 2). If you are considering membership and have not been baptized as a believer, talk with one of our elders. We would love to walk through it with you.

KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 2:38–41; 8:12, 36–39; 16:30–34; Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12. 1689 Confession, chapters 28–29.

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