

# What?



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT  
BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

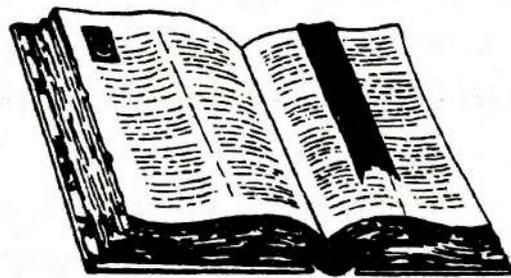
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# WHAT?

## *Me join this Church?*



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT  
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Project of 1-10-11

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Dear Reader:

We live in times of much indolence when it comes to the things of God. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of days when "*iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold,*" (*Matthew 24:12*), while Paul wrote of the last days when people would have "*a form of godliness...denying the power thereof*" (*II Timothy 3:5*). These days are surely upon us.

The prevailing attitudes of our general society seem to have infiltrated the hearts and lives of large numbers of God's people — especially when it comes to church membership. Many professing Christians see no need to 'join a church' and are content simply to attend. Perhaps this gives them the freedom to "hop around" from place to place; it certainly relieves them of any real commitment ("Why get involved??")! Maybe they are dissuaded by the ecumenical "hodge-podge" of so-called 'churches' in the community ("Which one to join??"). Possibly they have been discouraged by the testimony of other Baptists who are anything but faithful to their own church.

Reasons? ... perhaps! — but certainly not excuses. True Christians must not base their beliefs and lifestyles upon what others may say or do. According to Hebrews 11:6, those who want to please God do so by faith, and "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (*Romans 10:17*). In other words, it is not what we feel, what we think, or what others say or do — it is what GOD says in His holy Word that matters.

If you are serious about being a real disciple of Jesus Christ then this Bible study is for you. It sets forth **five** scriptural reasons why every saved person ought to **JOIN** a Bible-believing Baptist church in active and joyful participation.

Church membership is a **COMMAND**

Church membership is a **COMMODITY**

Church membership is a **COMMUNION**

Church membership is a **COMMITMENT**

Church membership is a **CAUSE**

May God bless your heart as you 'search the scriptures to see whether these things are so'— and may God help you to "*do always those things that please him*" (*John 8:29*).

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS A COMMAND

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Now, you cannot find a verse in the Bible which states explicitly "Thou shalt join this Church," but if you study the New Testament you will clearly see that active church membership is God's directive for every believer.

Though not directly stated, God's command is:

## INHERENT IN THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM

### **The Lord adds believers to His churches:**

*"And the Lord **added** to the church daily such as should be saved"*  
— Acts 2:47

### **Believers are added to a church by baptism:**

*"Then they that gladly received his word [salvation] were baptized, and the same day there were **added** unto them..."* — Acts 2:41

### **The baptizing of believers is commanded by Jesus Christ:**

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"* — Matthew 28:19

Because the Lord *commanded* His churches to baptize those who believe on Him, it follows that believers are thereby commanded to be baptized — and since baptism adds the believer to the church, the obvious conclusion is that believers are commanded to join a church.

## IMPLIED IN THE EXAMPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

### **The Church at Jerusalem...**

- Had a numbered membership:

*"...the **number** of the names together were about an hundred and twenty"* — Acts 1:15.

Evidently there was a membership roll of some sort (either written or memorized).

- Had a distinct membership:

*"...they went to their **own** company..."* — Acts 4:23.

This church was still meeting in Solomon's porch at the temple (a busy place), yet *their* company was distinguishable from other groups and the general public—implying a definite membership.

- Had a unified membership:  
*"And the multitude of them that believed were of **one** heart and of **one** soul:"* — Acts 4:32.
- Had a voluntary membership:  
*"And of the rest durst no man **join** himself to them:"* — Acts 5:13.  
 A voluntary church membership is an historic Baptist distinctive. We reject all forms of coercion in spiritual matters—whether it be the insidious sprinkling of unwilling infants (supposedly to 'save' them and make them members of the 'Church' and the kingdom of God), or the use of physical force to compel men to join a particular religion or denomination. In this case (Acts 5:1-11), when people saw that church membership was a serious business, they decided not to join!!
- Had a functioning membership:  
*"...look ye out **among you** seven men ... And the saying pleased the **whole** multitude:"* — Acts 6:3,5.
- Had a joinable membership:  
*"...he assayed to **join** himself to the disciples:"* — Acts 9:26.  
 Saul wanted to unite with the church at Jerusalem but they refused to accept him!! (until Barnabas commended him to them).

### The church at Antioch...

- Had a visible membership:  
*"...they assembled themselves **with** the church..."* — Acts 11:26.

### The church at Corinth...

- Had a separated membership:  
*"But now I have written unto you not to **keep company**, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ... do not ye judge them that are **within**? ... Therefore put away **from** yourselves that wicked person"* — I Corinthians 5:11-13.  
 This passage, dealing with the discipline of an erring member, makes a distinction between those 'within' and 'without' the church. The fact that members can be put out of a church means there has to be a membership in place.

### The church at Philippi...

- Had an organized membership:  
*"...all the saints in Christ Jesus which are **at** Philippi, **with** the bishops [pastors] and deacons"* — Philippians 1:1.

The saints (believers) in the city of Philippi were not 'drifters' ("doing their own thing") when it came to church membership. They were with the pastors and deacons — both church offices.

### The church at Troas...

- Had a 'gathering' membership:

*"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together ... they were gathered together" — Acts 20:7,8.*

## INDICATED BY CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS CHURCHES

Ephesians 5:25

*"...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it..."*

How can we say we love the Lord and not love what **He** loves with a passion?

Revelation 1:13,20

*"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man ... the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."*

Every Bible-believing Baptist church is a spiritual temple, "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). Although God is everywhere present, in a special way He dwells in the midst of His churches. How, then, can we say we love the Lord and yet not want to be where **He** is?

Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15), "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46)

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS A COMMODITY

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There is immense spiritual benefit to be gained through active church membership. Joining a church is vital to your Christian life and growth — no matter what 'age and stage' you feel you are at spiritually.

## THIS CHURCH IS HERE FOR YOUR INSTRUCTION

**The Lord Commanded It** — Matthew 28:20

*"Teaching them to observe **all** things whatsoever I have commanded you:"*

**The Early Churches Practiced It** — Acts 2:42

*"And they **continued** steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine..."*

**Pastors Are Appointed To It:**

*Ephesians 4:11-13 — "And he gave some...pastors and teachers; For the **perfecting** of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [mature, complete] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"*

*I Timothy 4:6 — "If thou **put the brethren in remembrance** of these things thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine..."*

*I Timothy 5:17 — "Let the elders [pastors]...who labour in word and **doctrine**."*

*Titus 2:1,15 — "But **speak** thou the things which become sound doctrine ... These things **speak**, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority..."*

*Hebrews 13:7 — "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have **spoken** unto you the word of God:"*

*I Corinthians 14:4,5 — "...he that **prophesieth** [preaches] edifieth the church ... that the church may receive edifying."*

*I Peter 5:1,2 — "The elders [pastors] which are among you I exhort ... **Feed** the flock of God which is among you..."*

*Acts 20:28 — "...**feed** the church of God..."*

*Colossians 3:16 — "...**teaching** and **admonishing** one another..."*

## THIS CHURCH IS HERE FOR YOUR PROTECTION

### **Provided by the Pastors:**

*Hebrews 13:17 — "Obey them that have the rule over you...for they **watch** for your souls..."*

### **Protection from False Teachers:**

*Acts 20:28,29 — "Take heed...to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers [pastors] ... For I know this, that after my departing shall **grievous wolves** enter in among you, not sparing the flock."*

### **Protection from the Attacks of Satan:**

*II Timothy 2:24-26 — "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ... that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the **devil**..."*

## THIS CHURCH IS HERE FOR YOUR CORRECTION

### **From the Pulpit:**

*I Thessalonians 5:12 — "...know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and **admonish** you;"*

*II Timothy 4:2 — "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** with all longsuffering and doctrine."*

### **From the Pew:**

*Matthew 18:17 — "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church..."*

*I Corinthians 6:4 — "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church."*

## THIS CHURCH IS HERE FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

### **Every Baptist church is likened to a Body:**

*Colossians 1:18 — "And he is the head of the **body**, the **church**..."*

### **Each church member is likened to a part of that body:**

*I Corinthians 12:27 — "Now ye are the body of Christ, and **members in particular**."*

*Romans 12:5 — "So we, being many, are **one body** in Christ, and every one **members one of another**."*

## Every single church member is important to the body:

*1 Corinthians 12:14,22 — "For the body is not one member, but many ... those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are **necessary**:"*

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS A COMMUNION

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Communion means possessing something in common. All saved people everywhere have a common salvation (*Jude 3b*) and belong to a common family (*Ephesians 3:15*) — but the communion experienced within a Baptist church goes far beyond these things. There is a wonderful, healthy, interdependency established through Church membership.

## A COMMUNION INVOLVING FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship has been 'described' as "a company of fellows in the same ship" — i.e. going in the same direction, and working together toward the same goal. True fellowship is always:

### **Centered on the Lord Jesus Christ:**

*1 John 1:3b — "...and truly our fellowship is **with** the Father, and **with** his Son Jesus Christ."*

### **Contingent upon a Holy Walk:**

*1 John 1:6,7 — "If we **say** that we have fellowship with him, and **walk** in darkness, we **lie**, and do not the truth: But if we **walk** in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..."*

### **Conditioned by the Word of God:**

*1 John 1:3a — "That which we [the apostles] have seen and heard **declare** we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us:..."*

*Acts 2:42 — "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' **doctrine** and **fellowship**..."*

*Amos 3:3 — "Can two walk together, except they be **agreed**?"*

### **Characterized by a Common Goal:**

*Philippians 1:5 — "For your fellowship in the **gospel**..."*

## A COMMUNION INVOLVING PRAYER

The exercises of the Christian life call for *private* prayer (Matthew 6:6), *partnership* prayer (Matthew 18:19), and *public* prayer. Surely the church prayer meetings are one of the great blessings of Baptist church membership!

Acts 2:42 — “And they **continued** ... in **prayers**.”

Acts 4:24,31 — “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with **one accord** ... And when they had **prayed**, the place was shaken where they were assembled **together**...”

Acts 12:5 — “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but **prayer** was made without ceasing of the **church** unto God **for** him.”

James 5:14,15 — “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders [pastors] of the **church**; and let them **pray** over him ... And the prayer of faith shall save the sick...”

James 5:16 — “...**pray** one for another...”

## A COMMUNION INVOLVING BENEVOLENCE

### **Putting Others First:**

Philippians 2:4 — “Look not every man on his own things [affairs], but every man also on the things of **others**.”

Romans 15:1 — “We then that are strong ought to **bear** the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

### **Looking for Opportunities to be a Blessing:**

Galatians 6:10 — “As we have therefore **opportunity**, let us do good unto **all** men, **especially** unto them who are of the household of faith.”

### **Taking Care of Fellow Church Members:**

1 Corinthians 12:25,26 — “...but that the members should have the **same care** one for another. And whether **one** member suffer, **all** the members suffer with it; or **one** member be honoured, **all** the members rejoice with it.”

Galatians 6:2 — “**Bear** ye one another’s **burdens**, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

James 2:15,16 — “If a **brother** or **sister** be **naked**, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

John 13:34 — "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye **love one another**; as I have loved you, that ye love one another."

## A COMMUNION INVOLVING TESTIMONY & PRAISE

God's desire is to receive glory through His churches (Ephesians 3:21). One way this is accomplished is through:

### **Congregational Singing:**

Ephesians 5:19 — "Speaking to **yourselves** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"

Colossians 3:16 — "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing **one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Psalms 107:32 — "Let them exalt him also in the **congregation** of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

Psalms 149:1 — "Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the **congregation** of saints."

### **Concerted Testimony:**

Acts 2:47 — "Praising God..."

Acts 11:18 — "And when they [the church at Jerusalem] heard these things, they ... **glorified God**..."

Hebrews 13:15 — By him therefore let **us** offer the sacrifice of **praise** to God **continually**, that is, the fruit of **our** lips giving thanks to his name."

1 Peter 2:5,9 — "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood ... a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the **praises** of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS A COMMITMENT

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That's right! You cannot be a "pew-warmer" in a Bible-believing Baptist church. Joining this Church will require a substantial commitment on your part — of your time, your treasures, your talents, and your temple (*I Corinthians 6:19,20*). It will be worth it all just to hear our blessed Saviour say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (*Matthew 25:21*).

Membership requires:

## **A commitment to faithful Service:**

*I Corinthians 3:9,10,13* — "For we are labourers **together** with God: ... But let every man take heed how he buildeth ... Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it..."

*II Corinthians 5:9,10* — "Wherefore we **labour**, that...we may be accepted of him. For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body..."

## **A commitment to liberal Support:**

*Acts 11:29* — "Then the disciples, **every** man according to his **ability**, determined to send relief unto the brethren ... Which also they did, and sent it unto the elders [pastors]..."

*I Corinthians 16:1,2* — "Now concerning the collection...as I have given order to the churches ... Upon the first day of the week let **every one of you** lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..."

*II Corinthians 9:7* — "...God loveth a cheerful **giver**."

## **A commitment to loving Submission:**

*Hebrews 13:17* — "**Obey** them that have the rule over you, and **submit** yourselves..."

*I Thessalonians 5:12,13* — "...know them which labour among you, and are **over you** in the Lord ... And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake..."

## **A commitment to preserving Sanctification:**

*I Corinthians 3:16,17* — "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is **holy**, which temple are ye."

I Corinthians 10:21 — “Ye **cannot** drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils...”

II Corinthians 6:16 — “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the **temple** of the living God...”

Finally....

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS A CAUSE

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A Baptist church is not meant to be a social club: it exists for a specific, God-given purpose. This purpose is given in the “Great Commission” of our Lord to His churches (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47,48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). Everything we do here is centered around these ‘marching orders.’

Membership in this Church engages you in a two-fold cause:

### THE CAUSE OF EVANGELISM

#### **Winning the Lost to Christ in our Community:**

Acts' 1:8 — “...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem...”

Acts 5:28 — “...ye have **filled** Jerusalem with your doctrine...”

Acts 5:42 — “And daily in the temple, and in **every house**, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

All members of this Church are expected to personally seek the salvation of their kindred, their friends, neighbors, acquaintances, etc. The Church also meets regularly for organized efforts to get the Gospel out into our community.

Jude 22,23 — “And of some have **compassion**, making a difference: And others save with **fear**, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

Proverbs 24:11,12 — “If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death ... If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?”

II Corinthians 5:11,14,20 — "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we **persuade** men ... For the **love** of Christ constraineth us; ... Now then we are **ambassadors** for Christ..."

### **Winning the Lost to Christ in our Region:**

Acts 1:8 — "...and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... in all Judæa..."

Acts 19:10 — "And this continued by the space of two years; so that **all** they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus..."

### **Winning the Lost to Christ in our Nation:**

Acts 1:8 — "...and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... in Samaria..."

Acts 8:5 — "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."

### **Winning the Lost to Christ in All The World:**

Acts 1:8 — "...and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... unto the **uttermost** part of the earth."

Acts 8:4 — "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went **everywhere** preaching the word."

Notice in this instance, the "they" comprised all the church's membership — except the leadership which remained in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1)!

Romans 10:14,15 — "How then shall they **call** on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they **believe** in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they **hear** without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be **sent**..."

Acts 13:2,3 — "As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed ... they **sent** them away."

I Thessalonians 1:8 — "For from you [the church at Thessalonica] sounded out the word of the Lord **not only** in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in **every place** your faith to God-ward is spread abroad;..."

I Timothy 2:3,4 — "...God our Saviour ... will have **all** men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

II Peter 3:9 — "The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that **all** should come to repentance."

The Lord's commission is more than winning people to Christ — it also involves baptizing those who believe *and* teaching them all things (Matthew 28:19,20). Therefore, true Biblical evangelism is only fully accomplished when new Bible-believing Baptist churches are established wherever the Gospel of Christ is preached — Acts 14:21-23; 16:5.

The heartbeat of our Church is biblical evangelism (Romans 10:1). Therefore we do *everything* we can to disciple everyone we can — **and** we join with other Bible-believing Baptist churches of like faith and order to reach those we cannot reach, by prayerfully and financially supporting teams of Church-sent evangelists to “*preach the gospel in the regions beyond*” (II Corinthians 10:16).

THE NEED IS GREAT ★ THE CAUSE IS RIGHT ★ THE DUTY IS CLEAR



## THE CAUSE OF DEFENDING THE FAITH

### There is only ONE Faith:

Ephesians 4:5 — “One Lord, **one faith**, one baptism,”

Jude 3 — “...the faith which was **once** delivered unto the saints.”

Acts 20:27 — “For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all** the counsel of God.”

### This ONE Faith is Important:

Jude 20 — “But ye, beloved, **building up yourselves** on your most holy **faith**...”

Colossians 2:6,7 — “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and **stablished** in the **faith**...”

I Peter 5:8,9 — “...your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom **resist** stedfast **in the faith**...”

Ephesians 4:13,14 — “Till we **all** come in the unity of **the faith** ... That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...”

I Corinthians 16:13 — “Watch ye, stand fast **in the faith**, quit you like men, be strong.”

### **This ONE Faith is under Attack:**

I Timothy 4:1 — “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart** from THE faith...”

II Peter 2:1 — “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall **bring in damnable heresies**, even **denying** the Lord that bought them...”

II Timothy 4:3,4 — “For the time will come when they will **not endure** sound doctrine ... And they shall **turn away** their ears from THE truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The last almost 2,000 years of history has seen a repeating cycle of Baptist apostasy — churches ‘falling away’ from the faith. This departure from the truth is the reason for the multiplicity of so-called ‘churches’ and religious groups in existence today.

### **This ONE Faith is to be Defended:**

Jude 3 — “...exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend** for the faith...”

Titus 1:13 — “Wherefore **rebuke** them **sharply**, that they may be **sound** in the faith;”

I Timothy 6:3-5 — “If any man teach otherwise, and **consent not** to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the **doctrine** which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth...from such **withdraw** thyself.”

### **The Lord’s Churches are the Defenders of the ONE Faith:**

I Timothy 3:15 — “...the church of the living God, the **pillar** and **ground** of the **truth**.”

“If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything,” and this Church stands steadfastly for the “word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9). The Authorized, King James Bible is our only (and absolute) authority; the New Testament is our ‘Church Charter.’



# Is One Church as good as Another?

Many Christians seem to have the attitude, "Oh, well, I don't think it makes any difference, just so long as you are saved. One church is just as good as another." This *sounds* nice, but is it true?

There are a number of denominations and 'churches' to be found in our area, teaching almost every conceivable kind of doctrine. In many instances, their teachings are in direct conflict — one 'church' preaching a doctrine that another rejects! Both *cannot* be right — indeed, both may be wrong! The Bible is the authority.

To answer this important question, consider the following:

- A 'church' established by man is not the same as a church established by Christ and the apostles.

The Bible says that Jesus Christ established His church while He was here on the earth (*Matthew 16:18*), and that He promised His churches would continue to exist through all the ages until His return (*Matthew 28:20b*). Baptists do not trace their history to any human founder — they go back to Jesus Christ, the "Author and Finisher of our faith" (*Hebrews 12:2*).

- A 'church' that teaches error is not the same as a church that teaches truth.

Most religious organizations have long abandoned the pure Word of God (the Authorized, King James Version) — substituting for it one of the multiplicity of perversions available today. How can they teach truth? True Baptists have always been a people of THE Book, and have diligently sought to preach it, teach it, practice it, and live and die by it — without addition (*Matthew 15:9; Proverbs 30:6*) or subtraction (*Deuteronomy 4:2*).

- A 'church' that teaches only *part* of the truth is not the same as a church that teaches the whole truth.

We have no right to "pick and choose" which doctrines we want to believe and what practices we want to follow — we must accept the *whole* counsel of God. According to *Luke 7:30*, to refuse baptism is to reject the counsel of God!

- A 'church' that gives glory to men is not the same as a church which glorifies God.

We are not to elevate or adulate men (*1 Corinthians 1:29,31; 2:4,5; 3:7,21; 4:5-7*). It is the LORD who should receive all the "glory in the church" (*Ephesians 3:21*).

If the Bible is your guide, then one 'church' is not as good as another!

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## *Convinced?*

### **Yes, this is for me! How do I join?**

The Bible teaches a regenerate (born again, saved) church membership. Real (biblical) salvation is the first scriptural requirement for membership in this Church. Are you saved? Was there a definite point and place in time when you repented of your sins and by faith received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? Do you know Him? Are you one of His children? Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" — *John 10:27*. Before you go any further you must settle the matter of salvation with full assurance based on the Word of God (*1 John 5:10-13*).

There are **two** ways a believer may scripturally join this Church:

#### **BY BAPTISM**

This is the initial way to join any Baptist church. It is the first step of obedience required of a child of God, and it adds to the church which authorizes the baptism.

*"Then they that gladly **received** his word were **baptized**, and the same day there were **added** unto them about three thousand souls" — Acts 2:41.*

*"For by one Spirit are we all baptized **into** one body" — 1 Corinthians 12:13.*

If you were led to Christ through the ministry of this Church, you should unite with it at the earliest opportunity by presenting yourself for scriptural baptism.

### BY COMMENDATION

If you already belong to another Baptist church of like faith and order and wish to transfer your membership here, we may receive you by means of a letter of commendation from that church. This letter will tell us that you are a member in good standing with that church, and will serve to notify both churches of your decision.

The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: "*Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, **epistles** of commendation to you, or **letters of commendation** from you?*" — II Corinthians 3:1.

The church at Ephesus wrote to the church at Corinth (concerning Apollos) "*exhorting the disciples to receive him*" — Acts 18:27.

Phebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, was commended to the church at Rome "*that ye receive her in the Lord*" — Romans 16:1,2.

The Bible says: "*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him*" (I Corinthians 12:18). Seek God's leadership through earnest prayer. Then if you are certain He wants you to join this church, present yourself for membership on the basis of a letter. One thing is for certain — the Lord wants you to be part of a Bible-believing Baptist church where you can fulfill the obligations and duties of membership.

*"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." — I John 5:3*

May the Lord bless you as you obey His commandments.

— NOTES —

## CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and upon the profession of our faith having been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this congregation, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant one with another as the Body of Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to give this Church a sacred pre-eminence over all human institutions and organizations; to strive for its advancement, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry, expenses, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations; and to honour, esteem, and love our pastor, to pray for him fervently and daily, to submit to him in the exercise of his office, to attend constantly upon his ministrations, and to manifest a tender regard for his reputation.

We also engage to maintain secret and family devotions; to bring up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossip, tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from all worldly and harmful indulgences; to oppose all conduct which compromises our Christian testimony and uphold high standards of Christian morality; and to be zealous in our service for the Lord.

We further engage to walk together in Christian charity; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling, and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the command of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Baptist church of like faith and order, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.