



TRINITY INTERNATIONAL

BAPTIST MISSION • CAROL STREAM • ILLINOIS

August 25, 2011

Position Statement on the Mode of Baptism

Trinity International Baptist Mission (TIBM) affirms the current *Baptist Faith & Message* statement that baptism is to be understood as the “immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”.¹ Believer’s baptism by immersion is what we teach and practice in our church.

We also recognize that a diversity of opinion and practice exists regarding this important issue among true Christians in the global Body of Christ. When appropriate, we are prepared and eager to advocate from Scripture for baptism by immersion in a spirit of love and humility with our brothers and sisters in Christ who may see things differently. However, we do not accept that a difference of opinion on this matter constitutes sufficient grounds for the separation of brethren. The baptism debate must not be allowed to rend asunder the body of our Lord.

Moreover, we recognize the possibility that a follower of Christ, while perhaps preferring baptism by immersion, may not have been able to receive such a baptism due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control (e.g. lack of access to sufficient water, security concerns, health concerns, the missionary that initially shared the gospel with them did not practice immersion, etc.). As a local church, we believe that such baptisms must be considered as fully valid and immensely pleasing to the Lord – that in such situations, God is more interested in the sincere profession of faith than in the mode of baptism.

In light of these realities, those individuals seeking to become a part of TIBM, who have been baptized as believing disciples of Jesus Christ, and who have demonstrated a commitment to live and serve as a vital part of our local church body shall thus be allowed to participate fully in the fellowship, life and ministry of TIBM regardless of the mode of baptism they initially received. It is important to note, of course, that TIBM doesn’t think of church membership in the same way that many other Southern Baptist Churches do. When an individual desires to “join” TIBM, they are considered on a case-by-case basis. They are not voted into the church, but rather are commissioned by the whole body for the ministry to which they are committing themselves. It is also worth mentioning that these individuals will always be allowed the opportunity to be baptized by immersion if they so desire.

¹ Note: by “mode” of baptism we are referring only to the manner in which water is applied to the body (i.e. immersion, affusion, or aspersion).



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In the Context of Broader Southern Baptist Life

The above items notwithstanding, TIBM also greatly values the accountability, partnership, collaboration, and fellowship that we enjoy as part of the Southern Baptist family in Illinois. As in any family, the relationships within our state and local associations require the cultivation of positive and mutually edifying relationships and often will involve making humble and generous concessions one to another. We recognize the freedom that other Southern Baptist churches and entities have in Christ to develop more formal rules and procedures regarding church membership and baptism. Out of love and respect for these Southern Baptist brothers and sisters in Christ, we make the following commitments:

- In the future, should a Southern Baptist Church or entity request a statement or letter of reference regarding an individual that was formerly a part of TIBM, we will make it a point to inform that church clearly if the individual was not baptized by immersion. This would include situations in which the individual was applying for membership in a new church, applications for employment at Southern Baptist churches or organizations, applications to serve with any of our mission boards, and all other situations in which an SBC entity would require a reference from our church.
- We will be committed to sending as messengers from TIBM to any local, state, or national denominational conventions only those from our church who have been baptized by immersion.
- We allow only those from our church who have been baptized by immersion to serve in any elected local or state associational office.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of our church,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cody C. Lorance". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Cody C. Lorance

Senior Pastor / Church Planting Leader
Trinity International Baptist Mission