

Administering Water Baptism

By Bill Scheidler

I. The preparation of the place

A. There must be adequate water to baptize by immersion.

1. The water should be clean and fresh.
2. The water should be a reasonable temperature.
3. The water should be easily accessible for both getting in and getting out.
4. The place should be useable all year round.

B. Some possible places that could be utilized.

1. An official church baptistery

If you do not have one, you can possibly utilize one from another church in the area.

2. A swimming pool

The best types of pools are ones that have gradual steps descending into the water.

3. A natural water source

This would include lakes, rivers and oceans. Make sure that a certain amount of privacy can be achieved and that any necessary permits are obtained.

4. A large water trough

These are portable units used for watering livestock. In such a case, those administering baptism would do it from the outside of the tank.

5. A large bathtub or hot tub

This is not ideal, but in emergencies it is possible.

C. The place should be accessible for congregational witnesses to the baptism.

II. The Preparation of the Candidate

A. In the spiritual realm

Provide a baptismal class where the candidates can be instructed in the biblical basis for baptism. This class should be about 45 minutes in length and the person leading the class should see to it that the following occurs:

1. Make a list of names for a permanent record.

2. Begin with prayer.
3. Have each person share very briefly, answering the following questions:
 - a. When, and under what circumstances, did you accept the Lord as your personal savior?
 - b. Why do you desire to be baptized today?

From these questions you will be able to discern their spirit and the genuine nature of their experience.
4. Share with them a basic teaching concerning baptism (See notes available titled *Water Baptism Class*).
 - a. This teaching should focus on why we should be baptized and what we can expect to take place.
 - b. This teaching should be aimed at inspiring faith to believe God for a biblical experience.
 - c. This teaching should be simple and clear so that even the children can understand it.
 - d. This teaching should emphasize the truths found in Romans 6 (dying to sin and living for God) and Colossians 3 (circumcision of the heart).
5. Ask the people if they have any questions.
6. Encourage them to spend time in prayer prior to their baptism.

As they pray they should:

- a. Seek God to do something special in their lives and to break off any life dominating sins.
- b. Ask God to cleanse and purify their hearts and impart grace to them.
- c. Ask God to give them something to share with others as a testimony prior to their baptism.

B. In the natural realm

There are certain natural guidelines having to do with procedure that will make for a better all around experience.

1. Let them know how to dress.
 - a. Modesty is the rule here especially in relation to the women who will be baptized.
 - b. Encourage them to wear a swim suit under street clothes.

- c. Encourage them to bring a complete change of clothes and a large towel.
 - d. Have some towels on hand and robes available for those who do not have proper attire.
 - e. Have women ready to assist the women candidates before and after baptism.
2. Let them know when and where you want them to get ready.
 3. Let them know what they should do when they join you in the water.
 - a. Be prepared to share a testimony and/or answer questions.
 - b. Hold their nose with left hand and their wrist with right hand as we lower you into the water.
 - c. Come out of the water praising the Lord with hands extended.
 - d. Wait in the water until those baptizing have had a chance to pray over them.
 4. Join the candidates prior to baptism for a corporate word of prayer.
 5. Give a brief exhortation to the congregation concerning what takes place in baptism and encourage them to renew their vows to the Lord.
 6. Enter the baptistery with the candidates, one at a time. You may want to bring married couples or families in the water together if the venue permits.
 7. Introduce the candidate to the congregation and have them answer a few questions or give a brief testimony. These answers should be kept brief and should be regulated based on the time available and the number of candidates being baptized. Some appropriate questions would include:
 - a. Do you love the Lord with all of your heart?
 - b. Under what circumstances did you accept Christ?
 - c. What does this baptism mean to you?
 - d. Etc.
 8. Baptize the candidate, totally submerging them in water (Have the candidate hold their nose before you put them under).
 9. As you baptize, say something like:

“Upon the confession of your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.
 10. Encourage the candidate and the congregation to praise the Lord.
 11. Pray over them before you dismiss them.

12. Encourage them to go in newness of life.

C. Additional guidelines for children under 12.

1. Their parents must be convinced of their salvation by the confession of their mouth and by the fruit of their life.
2. It should be the child's persistent desire to be baptized.
3. The parents must accompany the child to the class.
 - a. They should be encouraged to help explain the content of the class to their child.
 - b. They should be encouraged to make this a memorable time for the child.

Note: All of these guidelines would be subject to revision in the event that 3,000 were to be baptized at the same time (See: Acts 2:41).