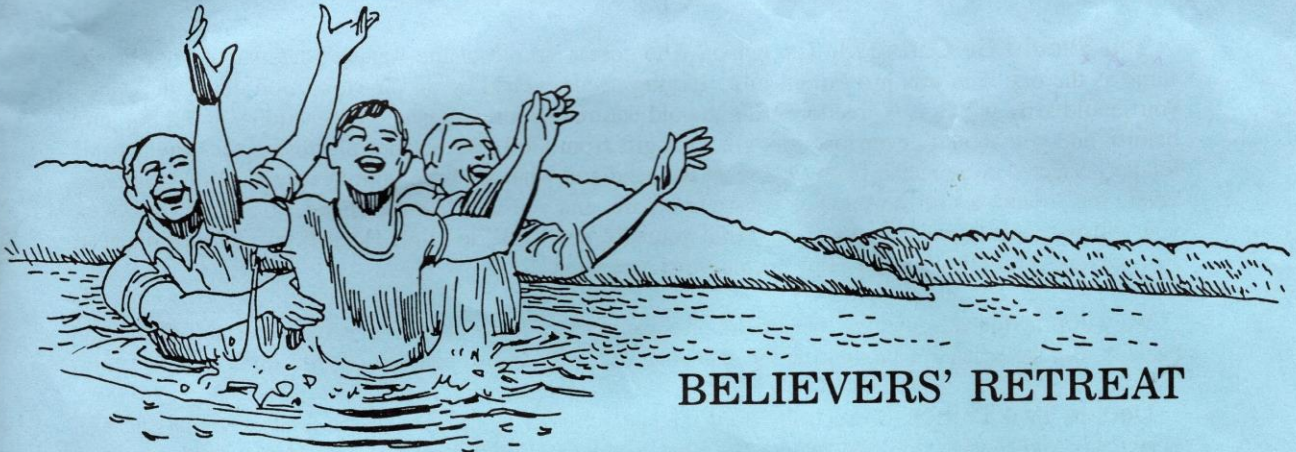


Water Baptism: The following is a copy of an introduction to water baptism which was created for use at Believers' Retreats for those who were interested in being baptized (which we did in nearby Kentucky Lake). It can be a useful aid if you know someone who is considering baptism or who is simply wanting to know a little more about it.

WATER BAPTISM FACT SHEET



BELIEVERS' RETREAT

Here at Believers' Retreat we offer you the opportunity to be baptized in water. Water baptism will be done in the lake at noon on Saturday, and we provide this fact sheet for your consideration so that you will be able to think and pray about it in advance.

If you have never been validly baptized in water, you need to be. Water baptism is a terribly important blessing in the life of a Christian. In the Scriptures water baptism is inseparably linked with salvation (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-18; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12; Acts 9:17,18; Acts 10:47,48; etc....)

We believe that baptism is for believers, and we baptize by immersion. If you do not agree, we won't fuss with you about it (or about anything else, for that matter); but this is our belief and this is our practice. The Greek word translated "baptize" in the New Testament means to dip or to plunge under, and such scripture passages as Romans 6:1-6 (which calls baptism a burial and a planting) and Matthew 3:13-17 seem to confirm this (immersion) as the form of Christian baptism. Acts 8:37, along with the scriptures already cited, seems to make it clear that water baptism is for believers. If your experience of baptism has been different from this and you are convinced of its validity we are in no way saying that you have missed it. That is strictly and entirely a matter between you and the Lord.

The Purpose of Water Baptism. There are a great many beliefs about water baptism. At one extreme of this spectrum would be those who believe that everything we will ever receive from the Lord comes to us when we are baptized; they, in a sense, would say that baptism is everything. At the opposite end of the spectrum would be those who believe that nothing really happens in baptism, that it is merely a symbol or an act of obedience.

We believe that the truth is, as usual, somewhere between these extremes. We believe that water baptism is not the means of receiving from the Lord all that He has for us; but we believe that it is far more important than a mere symbol or an act of obedience. We believe that the Scriptures teach us that we can meet the Spirit of God under the water, and that His touch should change us...positively and permanently. Throughout the New Testament we see the word picture of being baptized "into Christ" (e.g. Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27), and so putting on His nature. There is also the comparison with circumcision, in which the old flesh is cut away and left behind. It seems that valid water baptism is an act of faith in which we enter into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, taking on His nature and leaving the old fleshy nature behind. In a very real sense we can leave the old man dead in the watery grave and rise up to a new life, changed by the touch of God.

(Over)

You Should Be Changed. The person who comes up out of the watery grave should not be the same as the one who was just buried in it. Having been touched by the Spirit of God under the water, you should arise with a new freedom from the old nature and a resistance to temptation you did not have before; and you should never lose this gracious gift from God. We are not promising that you will be totally perfected; we receive from God what we need and what we have faith to receive. But, no matter what, you should not be the same as you were before, and you will like the change. If, under the water, you will put your mind on Jesus and, within yourself, say "yes" to Him, He will take care of the rest. Just surrender to Him and let Him decide what you need.

We will pray for you, and we will do the physical work of lowering you into the water and lifting you back up. But the Spirit of God must do the changing, or it will not be done. (Col 2:8-12 sums it up perfectly)

Decide Two Things. So seek the Lord, and search your heart. Read these (and other) passages of Scripture. And then decide two things: (1) What is valid water baptism? and (2) Have you received it? If you haven't, it will be available to you here.

Tom McKenney

Believers' Retreat is an outreach ministry of
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