

Canberra Austral-Asian Christian Church

# **BAPTISM HANDBOOK**



# Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering baptism at Canberra Austral-Asian Christian Church (CAACC). The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with the necessary information in preparing to be baptised. It is structured under six key headings:

- What is water baptism?
- What is the meaning of water baptism?
- What should accompany baptism?
- Why should I be baptised?
- Frequently asked questions
- Our baptism application process.

## 1. What is water baptism?

Water baptism is a public declaration of a person's belief in Jesus Christ where they are immersed in water to symbolise their identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection to new life.

In the Scriptures, two types of baptism are mentioned; being baptised in water and being baptised in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said ***"I will baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit"*** (Mark 1:8). John was referring to Jesus Christ as the one who baptises in the Holy Spirit.

## **2. What is the meaning of water baptism?**

### **To proclaim Jesus' death, burial and resurrection**

The act of baptism is a symbolic act that announces something significant has already happened in our life. When we become a Christian, we identify with Christ's death, burial and resurrection as we die to our old sinful way of living and are raised into the new life that Jesus has given us.

***Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12***

### **To proclaim my new life as a Christian**

The act of baptism does not make you a believer; it demonstrates and proclaims that you already believe. Salvation comes only through belief in Jesus Christ. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it is the outward symbol and declaration of the commitment we have already made in our heart.

***We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:4***

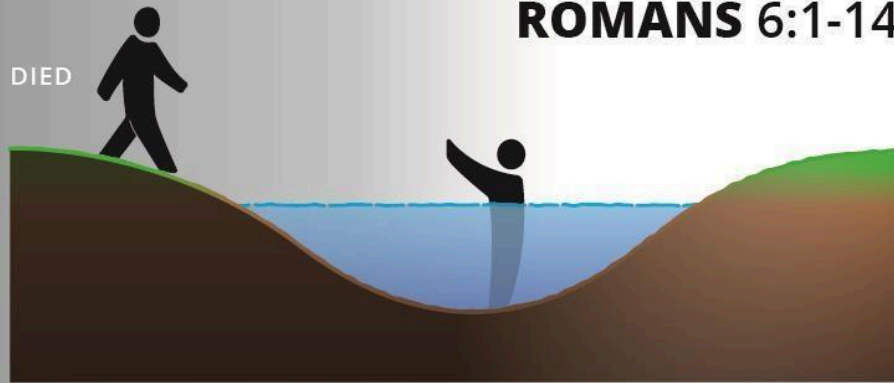
### **To proclaim my belonging to the Body of Christ**

When we become a Christian we are joined and connected into the body of Christ. This is not a physical body but a spiritual body. We are joined and connected by the Holy Spirit and are part of the family of God, our Father.

***For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 1 Corinthians 12:13***

## ROMANS 6:1-14

DIED



BURIED



RAISED



LIFE

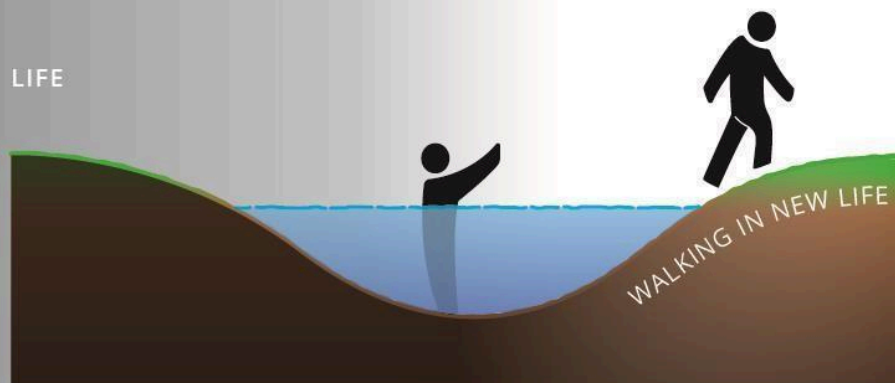


Illustration of the meaning of water baptism<sub>m</sub>

### **3. What should accompany baptism?**

#### **Repentance**

To repent is to change one's mind or purpose at more than a superficial level. When we acknowledge what Jesus has done for us in dying on the cross for our sins we make a decision to choose God's way over any other way.

***Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.***

**Acts 2:**

**38**

Repentance is portrayed in baptism when we understand the baptistery as a grave. As we come to the grave we die, which is why you will be asked the question "Do you repent of your sin?" We are then buried or immersed together with Jesus, in his death, burial and resurrection. This is why you will be asked "Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?"

***Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.***

**Romans 6:3-4**

#### **Forgiveness**

When we confess our sins and repent, Jesus will forgive our sins. This forgiveness is continuous, ongoing and total. We are totally cleansed and forgiven.

***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins***

*and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

*1:9*

**1 John**

## **Union with Jesus**

To be baptised in/into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is to be joined to God himself who gives us a new life when we believe. We now live by the beliefs and values of the kingdom of Christ rather than our own selfish desires.

***For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.***

***Colossians 3:3***

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17***

## **The gift of the Holy Spirit**

Baptism and the Holy Spirit are closely linked in the Bible. Just as baptism does not create the new birth, baptism does not guarantee the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit of God brings the new birth and sets us into God's kingdom. Baptism expresses this reality.

***Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38***

The Spirit is the one who overwhelms us and His presence enables us to live a God-directed life. He is sent to help, guide and empower us as we give ourselves to a new life in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ in the world. This can happen in a variety of ways, and no one experience of God's Spirit can be seen as the model for others. God works in numerous different ways to achieve his will in us.

***For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.***

***Romans 8:14***

Being filled with the Spirit is not a once only event. We are taught to be filled with the Spirit on an ongoing basis as we journey through



the Christian life; to go on being filled.

## **Union with other believers**

When we become a Christian we are connected into the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul explains how believers are to relate and use their gifts to serve each other within a church. The picture he uses is that of the human body, stating that the followers of Jesus were baptised into one body. This means that they were not only united with Jesus in baptism, but were united with each other.

***Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13***

One of the great misunderstandings of our society is that one can 'be a Christian without going to Church'. Paul is teaching us that if we are a Christian we are the church. Church is not something we go to, it is a body, something we belong to, or more correctly, who we are.

***For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:4-5***

## **4. Why should I be baptised?**

### **To demonstrate belief in Jesus Christ**

Baptism is a public declaration of what Jesus has done in our lives. It confirms what we know Jesus has done for us and that by faith we have believed and received Christ into our lives. So it is a personal affirmation that we have begun a new life in Christ and intend to follow Christ in all we do.

***....and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptised.***  
***Acts 18:8***

### **To follow the example set by Christ**

Jesus was baptised as an example for all of us to follow. Jesus does not request us to do anything that He has not already done.

***At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan.***  
***Mark 1:9***

### **To show our faith to others**

Baptism is an opportunity for others to hear and see what God has done in our life. It is faith in action – an outward sign of an inward change.

### **To obey Christ's command**

We are commanded by God to be baptised, and after that to go out and baptise others. In doing so we are being obedient to God.

***Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20***

Finally, because there is the blessing of God's favour that comes with all obedience, as well as the joy that comes through public profession of one's faith, and the reassurance of having a clear physical picture of dying a rising with Christ and of washing away sins. The Lord gave us baptism to strengthen and encourage our faith.

## **5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **Who should be baptised?**

Every person who believes in Jesus Christ.

***Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41***

### **When should I be baptised?**

When you believe and receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptised. There is no reason to delay – if you wait until you are ‘perfect’ you’ll never be ready!

***Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptised?’ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. Acts 8: 35-38***

### **What if I was baptised as an infant?**

Some churches baptise infants. The ceremony is intended to emphasise a commitment between the parents and God on behalf of the child, as they promise to raise the child in the faith until the child is old enough to make their own personal confession of Christ in a confirmation service.

At CAACC infants are not baptised but are offered a dedication service that emphasises the parent's role in raising a child to follow

Christ. We baptise those who have made their own decision to believe in Christ's death as the payment for their sin. In the Bible, men, women and children were baptised following their belief in Jesus.

***Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptised.***

***Acts 16:32-33***

## **Why immersion baptism?**

The New Testament was written initially in Greek, and the English words 'baptise' and 'baptism' were taken straight from the Greek words 'baptizo' and 'baptisma'. These were not religious words although they were used in a religious context. In Greek they mean to immerse, dip, submerge or overwhelm; or the place in which the immersing and dipping took place.

***And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.***

***Acts 8:38-39***

## **What happens during the baptism service?**

1. At the beginning of the service, the Pastor will briefly explain the meaning of baptism.
2. This is then followed by you sharing a brief (approx. three minute) testimony of how you became a Christian and why you want to be baptised as a believer.
3. Then you will wait at the edge of the stage for your turn to be baptised (Please bring a change of clothes, a towel and a plastic bag for your wet clothes).
4. You will then enter the water where the Pastor will ask you the following questions:
  - “Do you believe Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be.”
  - “Have you renounced your old way of life, repented of your sins, asked God to forgive you sins, to cleanse you and make you a new creation.”
  - “Do you confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, King, Ruler of your life.”
  - “With a good conscience, do you pledge you life to Jesus Christ.”
5. Once you have answered in the affirmative, the Pastor will say “upon your profession of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”
6. Then the Pastor will briefly lower you under the water and then raise you up out of the water
7. Then you can leave the pool, dry off, and watch the others.
8. Later you will be given a certificate of your baptism. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism.



## **Telling your story as a story**

### **Introduction**

I am [describe yourself], and my purpose is to [state your purpose]. For example, [a story from your life].

### **Complication**

So, I tried to achieve my purpose in these ways: [give a story/ies from your life]

But [now explain the problem of trying to achieve your purpose without God]. For example, [give a story from your life]

## **Resolution**

But this is what Jesus has done for me. [Explain how Jesus fulfils your purpose]

## **The High Point**

That's when I decided [explain how you decided to follow Jesus]

## **Resolution**

So now [explain what living with Jesus looks like in your life now]. For example, [give a story from your life as a Christian now]

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<sup>1</sup> Resources used in this Handbook include Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Baptism Handbook and 9marks papers