



Connecting to Colonial's Covenant – 1  
May 24, 2015

Pastor Phelps  
Matthew 13:24-30

## COMMITMENT #1 – SAVED MEMBERS

The Covenant of Colonial Hills Baptist Church begins with these words: *Having been led as we believe, by The Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.*

Contained in this paragraph are two essential prerequisites for church membership: \_\_\_\_\_ and baptism. Baptism prior to church membership is almost universally assumed within Christendom, but few churches require the candidate for membership to share a “profession of faith.”

- *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Presbyterian) regarding the church and its members reads, “The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their \_\_\_\_\_” (A.A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, p. 352). Technically, the Presbyterian Church does not believe that salvation comes through infant baptism, but rather teaches that baptism, “Is the rite of \_\_\_\_\_ into the Christian Church, and as there is no provision made for getting out of the Church when once in” (*The Confession of Faith*, The Publication Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church, pp. 107-108).
- *The Saint Joseph Baltimore Confession* of the Roman Catholic Church reads, “All are obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved . . . . Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life . . . by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven . . . . The effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism are that we should become \_\_\_\_\_ of the church . . . . Children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth (pp. 80, 152, 154).

In contrast to such confessions, Baptists have steadfastly held to the concept of a regenerate church membership.

- “It is the distinctive practice of the Baptists to require that a person must profess personal faith in Jesus Christ (be regenerated) before he or she can be a candidate for baptism and church membership” (*Baptist Bible Tribune*, Sept. 15, 1997, p. 20).

- *The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches* states, “If our churches are to fulfill their mission, remain true to their traditions and honor their apostolic pretensions, they must insist, with unabated vigor on a \_\_\_\_\_ membership. Nor must they insist in theory only, but take every precaution to maintain it in practice (p. 36).

Colonial Hills Baptist Church is committed to be a congregation of saved members!

## THE CHURCH DEFINED

A “Church” is not a building – it is a body (I Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18). The word, “church,” comes from the Greek word, *ecclesia*, which literally means, “called out.” The New Testament is clear; people become church members by \_\_\_\_\_ not by baptism.

- Acts 2:41 – *Then they that gladly **received** his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*
- Acts 2:47 – *The Lord added to the church daily such as should be **saved**.*
- Acts 5:14 – *And **believers** were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*
- Acts 8:12 – *When they **believed** Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus they were baptized, both men and women.*
- Acts 10:47 – *Can any forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have **received** the Holy Ghost as well as we?*

The New Testament makes it clear – Church members are believers! There are no references to infant baptism or assumptive memberships in the Bible.

## THE CHURCH DESCRIBED

The titles used to describe the members of the church of the New Testament are titles suited only to believers.

1. Church members are called \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-4). Unlike goats and wolves, sheep have a relationship with the Good Shepherd (John 10:26-28).
2. Church members are called a \_\_\_\_\_ house (I Pet. 2:5). Such a house cannot be built with unsaved stones.
3. Church members are called \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2). None but true believers own the title – “Saints.”

English Baptist, Henry Cook, rightly concludes, “The Church, then, is a society of \_\_\_\_\_ united to Christ by personal faith, and directed in their work and witness by the indwelling Spirit. The New Testament is perfectly clear on this point, and Baptists make it the basis of their practice . . . only believers can be baptized . . . only believers can join the Church and become members of ‘Christ’s holy society’” (*What Baptists Stand For*, p. 51).