

*Diocese of  
Dallas*



**TRIBUNAL**  
3725 Blackburn Street  
P.O. Box 190507  
Dallas, TX 75219  
214-379-2840 FAX 214-523-2437  
mgillett@cathdal.org

# **VALID BAPTISM**

## **A Guide to When Baptism or Conditional Baptism May be Required**

**Provided by the Diocese of Boise, Idaho  
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**Reviewed by the Diocese of Boise, Idaho  
and**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **Catechism of the Catholic Church, number 1271 says:**

Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church.

### **This enshrines two basic truths:**

#### **I**

The majority of Christians, not just Catholics, are doing the same thing when they baptize.

#### **II**

The baptism of non-Catholics is respected as much as Catholic baptism.

### **The Catechism goes on to emphasize:**

Baptism can happen only once.

## **THIS IS ALSO A MATTER OF CANON LAW**

### **Canon 845 States:**

**Baptism cannot be repeated because it imparts a character.**

This means the Catholic Church will in no circumstances baptize anyone unless it is certain they have not been validly baptized.

(Those baptisms which fall outside the norms accepted as “valid” by the Church are still respected, but certain requirements are regarded as essential for Catholics.)

### **Canon 849 States:**

**Baptism is validly conferred only by washing in real water with the proper form of words.**

**And this is also the view of most Christian bodies.**

Sometimes baptism has unquestionably been done, but there is a query as to whether it was validly done. Basically, the Church’s presumption is that the baptism is valid unless there is serious doubt. If there is serious doubt, conditional baptism may be unavoidable.

### **Canon 869 Paragraph 2 States:**

**Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community are not to be baptized conditionally unless there is a serious reason for doubting the validity of their baptism on the ground of the matter or the form of the words used in the baptism, or of the intention of the adult being baptized or that of the baptizing minister.**

#### **Note:**

This is insisting that, while there must be identity of form and matter and of intention with those of the Catholic Church, there is no requirement for identity of doctrine. But, obviously, if the Trinity is rejected, there cannot be an acceptable formula.

**THE CATHOLIC POSITION THEN IS  
THAT BAPTISM IS VALID PROVIDED WHAT HAS BEEN  
DONE IS  
“WHAT THE CHURCH DOES.”**

**This means, in effect, that, for validity, baptism involves the following:**

**Intentional**

The baptism must be “into Christ”

**Form**

The formula must invoke Father, Son and Holy Spirit

**Matter**

Water must be used and must flow over some part of the skin

IT IS DIFFICULT TO QUESTION THE VALIDITY OF A BAPTISM BECAUSE OF AN INTENTION EITHER ON THE PART OF THE MINISTER OR ON THE PART OF THE ONE BEING BAPTIZED. WHAT FOLLOWS IS A PARTIAL LIST ONLY, REGARDING MATTER AND FORM, NOT THE INTENTION.

WHILE MOST BAPTISMS DO CONFORM TO THESE REQUIREMENTS, A FEW DO NOT.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF HOW THE VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS ARE PLACED IN THIS RESPECT.

## SUMMARY

ADVENTISTS.....	<b>See Narrative Page 1</b>
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (AME).....	<b>VALID</b>
ALBRIGHT BRETHREN.....	<b>See Narrative Page 1</b>
AMISH.....	<b>See Narrative Page 1</b>
ANGLICAN.....	<b>VALID</b>
APOSTOLIC CHURCH.....	<b>INVALID</b>
ARMENIAN CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD.....	<b>See Narrative Page 2</b>
ASSYRIAN CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
BAPTISTS.....	<b>VALID ADULT</b> <b>See Narrative Page 2</b>
BOHEMIAN FREE THINKERS.....	<b>NO BAPTISM USED</b>
CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH.....	<b>See Narrative Page 2</b>
CHILDREN OF GOD.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHRISTADELPHIANS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE.....	<b>See Narrative Page 3</b>
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHRISTIANS OF ST. THOMAS.....	<b>VALID</b>
CHRISTIANS OF THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHURCH OF CHRIST.....	<b>VALID</b> <b>See Narrative Page 4</b>
CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST.....	<b>INVALID</b>

CHURCH OF DIVINE SCIENCE.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHURCH OF GOD.....	<b>See Narrative Page 4</b>
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA.....	<b>VALID</b>
CHURCH OF SRI LANKA.....	<b>VALID</b>
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN.....	<b>VALID</b>
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE.....	<b>VALID</b>
CHURCHES OF THE “EPISCOPI VAGANTES”.....	<b>VALID</b>
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b> <b>See Narrative Page 6</b>
COPTIC CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON’S CONNEXION.....	<b>VALID</b>
CZECH NATIONAL CHURCH.....	<b>See Narrative Page 6</b>
DISCIPLES AND CHRISTIANS.....	<b>VALID</b>
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.....	<b>VALID</b>
DISCIPLES OF RUDOLPH STEINER.....	<b>INVALID</b>
DOUKHOBORS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
DUNKERS.....	<b>VALID</b>
DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
EASTERN ORTHODOX.....	<b>VALID</b>
ENGLAND WESLEYAN CHAPEL HAS TWO BRANCHES:	
1) LIKE SALVATION ARMY.....	<b>NO BAPTISM</b>
2) 2ND BRANCH.....	<b>NO BAPTISM</b>
EPISCOPALIANS.....	<b>VALID</b>
ETHIOPIAN CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>

EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION .....	<b>See Narrative Page 8</b>
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES.....	<b>VALID</b>
EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN.....	<b>VALID</b>
FOUR SQUARE GOSPEL CHURCH.....	<b>VALID ONLY FROM MINIMUM AGE OF NINE</b>
FREE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.....	<b>VALID</b>
FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH UNION.....	<b>VALID</b>
HOLINESS CHURCH.....	<b>See Narrative Page 8</b>
HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF JAPAN.....	<b>VALID</b>
INDEPENDENT CALVINIST CHURCHES.....	<b>VALID</b>
IRVINGITES.....	<b>See Narrative Page 9</b>
JACOBITE CHURCHES.....	<b>VALID</b>
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.....	<b>INVALID</b>
LATTER DAY SAINTS .....	<b>INVALID</b>
LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	<b>APPARENTLY VALID</b>
LUSITANIAN CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
LUTHERANS.....	<b>VALID</b>
MALABAR CHRISTIANS.....	<b>VALID</b>
MAR THOMA CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
MASONS.....	<b>NO BAPTISM USED</b>
MENNONITES.....	<b>See Narrative Page 11</b>
METHODIST CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
MOONIES.....	<b>INVALID</b>
MORAVIAN CHURCH.....	<b>See Narrative Page 11</b>

MORMON CHURCH.....	<b>INVALID</b>
NAZARENE CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
NESTORIAN CHURCHES.....	<b>VALID</b>
NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH.....	<b>INVALID</b>
OLD BELIEVERS.....	<b>See Narrative Page 12</b>
OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
ORTHODOX CHURCHES.....	<b>VALID</b>
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES.....	<b>See Narrative Page 13</b>
PEOPLES CHURCH OF CHICAGO.....	<b>INVALID</b>
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT CHURCH.....	<b>See Narrative Page 14</b>
PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.....	<b>See Narrative Page 14</b>
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
PROTESTANT CHURCH OF TUVALU.....	<b>VALID</b>
QUAKERS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
REFORMED CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b>
REUNIFICATION CHURCH.....	<b>INVALID</b>
SALVATION ARMY.....	<b>NO BAPTISM USED</b>
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS.....	<b>See Narrative Page 15</b>
SHAKERS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
SPANISH REFORMED EPISCOPAL.....	<b>VALID</b>
SPIRITUALIST CHURCH.....	<b>INVALID</b>
SWEDENBORGIANS.....	<b>INVALID</b>



THE FAMILY.....	<b>INVALID</b>
UNITARIAN CHURCHES.....	<b>INVALID</b>
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.....	<b>VALID</b>
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.....	<b>VALID</b> <b>See Narrative Page 116</b>
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH.....	<b>VALID</b> <b>See Narrative Page 16</b>
UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA.....	<b>VALID</b>
UNIVERSALISTS.....	<b>INVALID</b>
WALDENSIANS.....	<b>VALID</b>
WELSH CHAPELS.....	<b>VALID</b>
ZION CHURCHES.....	<b>VALID</b> <b>See Narrative Page 17</b>

## **NARRATIVE**

### **ADVENTISTS (Seventh Day Adventists)**

Same as Seventh Day Adventists - The original Adventism died so long ago that there are no living adherents. There certainly is baptism (of adults only) by water and total immersion. But this church is not in the mainstream of theology, and it is doubtful if its formulae are either uniform or acceptable.

### **AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (AME) (Methodist Church)**

Valid Baptism - The African Methodist Episcopal Church is a thriving branch of Methodism, which originated in the United States and still is very active there and in the West Indies. Baptism is with water by sprinkling, pouring or immersion. Trinitarian form is used.

There is an open door ceremony, which is not baptism.

### **ALBRIGHT BRETHREN (Evangelical Association)**

This organization practices adult baptism, the form of which has not been possible to ascertain.

### **AMISH (Coupled with Mennonites)**

No infant baptism. Their baptism (of adults or near-adults) is valid as to form and matter. But there have been doctrinal splits, and some communities have become Unitarian in theology, rendering the baptism of those communities invalid.

### **ANGLICAN**

Valid Baptism - But note that English civil law does not accept lack of baptism in either party or in both as an obstacle to marriage in the parish church, and the Church of England recognizes this. Therefore, the fact that a declared member of the Church of England has been married in the Church of England cannot be taken as evidence of baptism. Identification Note: There is no standard form of nomenclature for Anglican churches; the most common forms are "The Episcopal Church of ..." or "The Church of the Province of ..."

### **APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

Invalid Baptism - An affirmative decision has been granted in one case involving baptism in the Apostolic Church. The minister baptized according to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and not St. Matthew. The form used was: "We baptize you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and you shall receive a gift of the Holy Ghost." No Trinitarian form was used. Individual baptism would need to be checked to see if the minister used a Trinitarian form.

### **ARMENIAN CHURCH**

Valid Baptism

## **ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (Pentecostal Churches)**

Valid Baptism - With Trinitarian Formula.

Invalid Baptism - When Unitarian Formula Used

There are many groups within Pentecostalism, and their practices vary. Baptism seems, on the whole, to be an ad hoc affair. It is frequently the custom to baptize a new member whether or not he or she already is baptized. Some Pentecostal baptisms probably do fulfill the criteria for validity, but it cannot be taken for granted. The baptism is invalid if the Unitarian formula is used. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion. A dedication ceremony is possible. Infants are not baptized customarily. Baptism through water takes place when a person is mature enough to understand its implications. The method of baptism is not outlined, but appears valid.

## **ASSYRIAN CHURCH (Nestorian Churches)**

Valid Baptism - Although the underlying ancient heresy was a different one, these churches were in the same position as the “monophysite” ones. Now there is an official doctrinal agreement between the Nestorians and the Holy See.

## **BAPTISTS**

Valid Baptism - but of adults only. Infants are dedicated and blessed, but this, in no way, amounts to baptism. It should also be noted that, when medical opinion advises that baptism (which involves total immersion) would endanger health, the “the intention is sometimes taken for the deed.”

## **BOHEMIAN FREE THINKERS**

No baptism is used. A name-giving ceremony is held, which is not baptism. There is no Trinitarian belief. No baptism of any kind is practiced.

## **CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH (Irvingites)**

This was a flourishing body in England at one time. But since its original “apostles” died unreplaced, it has, for some generations, had no sacramental source. The Irvingite baptism was valid, but it seems unlikely anyone still living would have received it. There are a few very old people who claim Irvingite origins, but they were probably baptized in the Church of England.

## **CHILDREN OF GOD (The Family)**

Invalid Baptism - If “The Family” should have baptism, this will be invalid for lack of intention. This sect has three strong characteristics: 1) It has great reverence for the Bible, 2) It repudiates virtually all aspects of orthodox Christianity, 3) It glorifies and practices sexual promiscuity from an early age, which it professes to find enjoined in the Bible.

## **CHRISTADELPHIANS**

Invalid Baptism - This sect accepts as valid only baptism by total immersion. But their own baptism is invalid because they reject the Trinity.

## **CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE**

No belief in infant baptism, but only to those who give evidence of repentance and new birth. Baptism is seldom conferred before the age of 12. It is conferred by immersion. It is given upon the personal confession of Christ, as the Savior of this person. The formula is not given, so each case would have to be checked to see if the Trinitarian formula was used.

## **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY (Disciples of Rudolph Steiner)**

Invalid Baptism - Their baptism was officially notified as invalid by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1991. Steiner's doctrines are an amalgam of Christianity and Theosophy.

## **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE or CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST**

Invalid Baptism - This denomination denies the existence of both matter and evil, so baptism would be irrelevant. The mother church of all Christian Science Churches states: "Baptism is an individual spiritual experience. It is not a religious rite or ceremony performed by an ordained minister or priest." The textbook states, "It is a purification by spirit." A letter from the Board of Directors states, "There is no baptism ritual in the Christian Science Movement." In other words, they have no true baptism.

## **CHRISTIANS OF ST. THOMAS (Malabar Christians and Mar Thoma Church)**

Valid Baptism - There have been indigenous Christians in what now is the State of Kerala in Southwest India, traditionally since the first century and, certainly, at least since the fifth century. Unfortunately, they have, over the centuries, been prone to schism and regrouping. Two of the groups (The Malankar Church and the Malabar Church) are now Catholic. One is Orthodox, associated with the Syrian Patriarchate. Others are Jacobite, and others again Nestorian. The Mar Thoma Church (the largest group, which now congregates in this country, now is loosely associated with the Anglican Community). However, although the general position is so complicated, luckily the baptismal situation is simple enough. All their baptisms are valid.

## **CHRISTIANS OF THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD (Doukhobors)**

Invalid Baptism - Although initially fairly orthodox dissenters, they became imbued with Tolstoyan philosophy and came to see the Trinity as godhead of three philosophical concepts in which Jesus (whom they now regard as a purely historical figure) played no part. If they still have baptism, it will certainly be invalid for the lack of intention and, presumably, also for the lack of form.

## **CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Valid Baptism - Entry into full membership is by means of baptism, which is valid. However, apparently this was not always required, so it may be that older members of the Church of Christ have not been baptized.

## **CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST**

Invalid Baptism - This denomination denies the existence of both matter and evil, so baptism would be irrelevant. No baptism used - The mother church of all Christian Science Churches states: "Baptism is an individual spiritual experience. It is not a religious rite or ceremony performed by an ordained minister or priest." The textbook states, "It is a purification by spirit." A letter to the Board of Directors states, "There is no baptismal ritual in the Christian Science movement." In other words, they have no true baptism.

## **CHURCH OF DIVINE SCIENCE**

Invalid Baptism - The ceremony is a christening ceremony but not one of baptism. There is no change brought about in the person who is blessed. The church does not believe in original sin, so the child is blessed only when received into the church. An affirmative decision has been granted in such a case.

## **CHURCH OF GOD (Pentecostal Churches)**

Valid Baptism - With Trinitarian Formula  
Invalid Baptism - When Unitarian Formula Used

There are many groups within Pentecostalism and their practices vary. Baptism seems, on the whole, to be an ad hoc affair. It is frequently the custom to baptize a new member whether or not he or she already is baptized. Some Pentecostal baptisms probably do fulfill the criteria for validity, but it cannot be taken for granted. Invalid baptism because of the Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion. A dedication ceremony is possible. Infants are not baptized customarily. Baptism through water takes place when a person is mature enough to understand its implications. The method of baptism is not outlined, but appears valid.

Invalid Baptism because of the Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion.

## **CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (Mormon)**

Invalid Baptism - On July 16, 2001, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published the following ruling concerning the validity of Mormon Baptism: "D. Whether baptism conferred in the community of 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,' spoken of as 'Mormons,' is valid. R. Negative." This ruling reflects a definitive change in the Church's official view of Mormon baptism as defined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

**What this means to you as ministers of the Church:** 1) Converts to Catholicism from the Mormon community must be absolutely baptized when they are received into the Church. If conditional baptism of Mormons is currently conducted, this practice is to cease. 2) For marriages, a Dispensation from Disparity of Worship must be obtained, as is the current practice. 3) For marriage cases coming before the Tribunal, members of the Mormon community are to be considered non-baptized.

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## **CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA**

Valid Baptism - This is a mainstream Protestant body formed in the 1940s. It has nothing to do with the Malabar Christians.

## **CHURCH OF SRI LANKA**

Valid Baptism

## **CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN (Formerly called Dunkers)**

Valid Baptism - Baptism is made by Triune immersion. The formula in Matthew is used.

## **CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

Valid Baptism - This once familiar denomination seems to be vanishing, and information is hard to come by. The sect was of Wesleyan descent but of strongly Puritan philosophy. It once was unclear whether or not they had a valid baptism. It now is considered valid.

## **CHURCHES OF THE “EPISCOPI VAGANTES” (Old Catholic Church)**

Valid Baptism - There are, or have been, many churches under this heading. They are minute, “do-it-yourself” sects. As an extreme example, one had a total membership of fourteen, of whom eleven were bishops; but not all are quite so outrageous. They claim a genuine Apostolic Succession, although obtained by underhanded means. Their heyday was probably in the 1920s, but they still very much exist. The problem is that large numbers of them include the phrase “Old Catholic” in their titles, while others use “Orthodox” or “Patriarchate,” either as well or instead, and some indeed use “Catholic.” Often they can be spotted by the very cumbersomeness of the names they have assumed. Since people of this nature set great store by “validity” (as opposed to legality and regularity), their baptisms almost certainly are valid. But, in view of the eccentricities, nothing can be taken for granted.

The genuine Old Catholic Church (i.e. that formed by the union of those Catholics who dissented from the Declaration of Papal Infallibility with the remnants of the Jansenists, and which had its Primal See

at Utrecht) is an entirely reputable organization whose practices are, in every way, proper. But their reputation has suffered unjustly as a result of the activities of self-styled “old catholic” churches.

### **CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (Evangelical, Reformed, United Church of Christ)**

Valid Baptism - But note, “Some ex-Baptists are members of our Churches who were not baptized on admission to communicant membership” (in the Congregational Church).

### **COPTIC CHURCH**

Valid Baptism - The Christology in this church is traditionally “monophysite,” but that does not affect validity.

### **COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON’S CONNEXION**

Valid Baptism

### **CZECH NATIONAL CHURCH**

Appears Valid - This was founded (by dissident Catholics) in the 1920s, flourished briefly and then dwindled. Its baptism would appear to be valid.

### **DISCIPLES AND CHRISTIANS (Disciples of Christ)**

Valid Baptism - This has been specifically stated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. But since this (in the United States) is the parent body of the Church of Christ (in the United Kingdom and Australia, etc.), presumably, the fact that baptism used not always to be given also applies to the Disciples of Christ.

There is a dedication service, no infant baptism. Trinitarian formula is used in baptism by immersion at an older age. These churches are sometimes known as the Disciples of Christ.

### **DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (Disciples and Christians)**

Valid Baptism - This has been specifically stated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. But since this (in the United States) is the parent body of the Church of Christ (in the United Kingdom and Australia, etc.), presumably, the fact that baptism used not always to be given also applies to the Disciples of Christ.

There is a dedication service, no infant baptism. Trinitarian formula is used in baptism by immersion at an older age. These churches are sometimes known as the Disciples of Christ.

### **DISCIPLES OF RUDOLPH STEINER (Christian Community)**

Invalid Baptism - Their baptism was officially notified **as invalid** by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1991. Steiner’s doctrines are an amalgam of Christianity and Theosophy.

### **DOUKHOBORS (Christians of the Universal Brotherhood)**

Invalid Baptism - Although initially fairly orthodox dissenters, they became imbued with Tolstoyan philosophy and came to see the Trinity as a godhead of three philosophical concepts in which Jesus (whom they now regard as a purely historical figure) played no part. If they still have baptism, it certainly will be invalid for the lack of intention and, presumably, also for the lack of form.

### **DUNKERS (Church of the Brethren)**

Valid Baptism - Baptism is made by Triune immersion. The formula in Matthew is used.

### **DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH**

Valid Baptism

### **EASTERN ORTHODOX**

Valid Baptism

### **ENGLAND AND WESLEYAN CHAPEL (Salvation Army and Second Branch)**

No Baptism - There are two branches: 1) Salvation Army; 2) Second Branch. Although the doctrine of the Army is basically Wesleyan, it has no sacraments. Infants and others are formally dedicated, but this is not a baptism. The Salvation Army Headquarters states they do not have a baptismal service, but a religious ceremony called a dedication service of children, and also a cradle roll. A certificate is issued for the dedication service, but is not to be confused with water baptism.

### **EPISCOPALIANS**

Valid Baptism

### **ETHIOPIAN CHURCH**

Valid Baptism - In the Coptic Church with which it is associated, the Christology is traditionally “monophysite”, but that does not affect the validity.

### **EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION (Albright Brethren)**

This organization practices adult baptism, the form of which it has not been possible to ascertain.

### **EVANGELICAL CHURCHES (Congregational, Reformed, United Church of Christ)**

Valid Baptism - But note, “Some ex-Baptists are members of our Churches who were not baptized on admission to communicant membership” (in the Congregational Church).



## **EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN**

Valid Baptism - Members are not received into this church unless they have been baptized. Assurance of baptism is required before membership is extended. There is a dedication ceremony. Baptism by water seems valid and generally is done by immersion, pouring or sprinkling. The Trinitarian form is used.

## **FOUR SQUARE GOSPEL CHURCH**

Valid Baptism - From a minimum age of nine. Younger children are merely dedicated.

## **FREE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

Valid Baptism - This small body renounced Anglicanism but retained most Anglican forms.

## **FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH UNION**

Valid Baptism - This embraces all mainstream French Protestants, whose baptisms are valid.

## **HOLINESS CHURCH (Pentecostal Churches)**

Valid Baptism - With Trinitarian Formula.

Invalid Baptism - When Unitarian Formula Used

There are many groups within Pentecostalism, and their practices vary. Baptism seems, on the whole, to be an *ad hoc* affair. It is frequently the custom to baptize a new member whether or not he or she is already baptized. Some Pentecostal baptisms probably do fulfill the criteria for validity, but it cannot be taken for granted. Invalid baptism because of the Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion. A dedication ceremony is possible. Infants are not baptized customarily. Baptism through water takes place when a person is mature enough to understand its implications. The method of baptism is not outlined but appears valid.

Invalid Baptism because of the Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion.

## **HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF JAPAN**

Valid Baptism - This is, in fact, the Japanese Anglican Church

## **INDEPENDENT CALVINIST CHURCHES (Many Welsh Chapels)**

Valid Baptism - The proper formula is used, and so is water.

Although the method of applying the water is at the minister's discretion, the conditions for valid baptism are fulfilled.

## **IRVINGITES (Catholic Apostolic Church)**

This was a flourishing body in England at one time. But since its original “apostles” died unreplaced, it has, for some generations, had no sacramental source.

The Irvingite baptism was valid, but it seems unlikely that anyone still living would have received it. There are a few very old people who claim Irvingite origins, but they were probably baptized in the Church of England.

## **JACOBITE CHURCHES**

Valid Baptism - The Christology in this church is traditionally “monophysite”, but that does not affect the validity.

## **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**

Invalid Baptism - This group practices a form of adult or near-adult baptism involving immersion in an outdoor body of water. But their theology is specifically anti-Trinitarian.

The Divinity of Christ is denied explicitly, as is the existence of the Holy Spirit as a person. In the ceremony of baptism, there is a discourse. It is really a symbol of dedication rather than a baptism. The person enters the water, but his name is not called out. No words or formula are pronounced while the person is submerged or immersed in the water. If matter and form are valid, the intention of the minister is to baptize the person into the Jehovah's Witness sect, thereby not intending that the person be baptized in the name of the Triune God. This is evident since the Divinity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit are denied. These latter refer simply to a power exerted by Jehovah, who alone is God.

## **LATTER DAY SAINTS (Mormon and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)**

Invalid Baptism -- On July 16, 2001, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published the following ruling concerning the validity of Mormon Baptism: “D. Whether baptism conferred in the community of ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,’ spoken of as ‘Mormons’, is valid. R. Negative.” This ruling reflects a definitive change in the Church’s official view of Mormon baptism as defined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

**What this means to you as ministers of the Church:** 1) Converts to Catholicism from the Mormon community must be absolutely baptized when they are received into the Church. If conditional baptism of Mormons is currently conducted, this practice is to cease. 2) For marriages, a Dispensation from Disparity of Worship must be obtained, as is the current practice. 3) For marriage cases coming before the Tribunal, members of the Mormon community are to be considered non-baptized.

## **LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Apparently Valid Baptism - with respect to matter and form.

## **LUSITANIAN CHURCH**

Valid Baptism - This small church is now, to all intents and purposes, part of the Anglican Communion.

## **LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Valid Baptism - As long as the Trinitarian formula is used. However, a case did arise in the United States a few years ago of a Lutheran pastor taking it on himself to baptize “in the name of the Creator, the Redeemer and the Comforter”, for which he was censured by his Ordinary. This caused considerable debate among the interested United States Catholics. Since the phrase is clearly an invocation of the Trinity, through an idiosyncratic phraseology, could this baptism be valid? No official ruling was sought or given, but the consensus was that it is not valid.

## **MALABAR CHRISTIANS (Christians of St. Thomas and Mar Thoma Church)**

Valid Baptism - There have been indigenous Christians in what is now the State of Kerala in Southwest India, traditionally since the first century and, certainly, at least, since the fifth century. Unfortunately, they have, over the centuries, been prone to schism and regrouping. Two of the groups (The Malankar Church and the Malabar Church) are now Catholic. One is Orthodox, associated with the Syrian Patriarchate. Others are Jacobite, and others again Nestorian. The Mar Thoma Church (the largest group, which now congregates in this country, now is loosely associated with the Anglican Community).

However, although the general position is so complicated, luckily the baptismal situation is simple enough. All their baptisms are valid.

## **MAR THOMA CHURCH (Christians of St. Thomas and Malabar Christians)**

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However, although the general position is so complicated, luckily the baptismal situation is simple enough. All their baptisms are valid.

## **MASONS**

No Baptism is used.

### **MENNONITES (Coupled with Amish)**

No infant baptism. Their baptism (of adults or near-adults) is valid as to form and matter. But there have been doctrinal splits, and some communities have become Unitarian in theology, rendering the baptism of those communities invalid.

### **METHODIST CHURCH (Zion Churches)**

Valid Baptism - However, there is a cradle roll, which is a listing of the names of the infants too young to attend Sunday School. This record is kept separate from the baptismal record. In many instances, names appear on both rolls. If it appears on one, it is no indication it would, or should, appear on the other. Since the church baptizes infants, however, if one is listed on the cradle roll, at least one pastor has stated it would seem to indicate that there was also baptism, which they may or may not have recorded.

### **MOONIES (Coupled with Reunification Church)**

Since the basic tenet of this faith is that Christ failed, any initiation rites they have must be unsound.

### **MORAVIAN CHURCH**

This church uses the proper Trinitarian formula, but the use of water (although, apparently, nowadays usual) is at the discretion of the minister. Therefore, in most cases, it cannot be determined whether or not an individual Moravian baptism was valid, and conditional baptism would seem to be justified.

### **MORMON CHURCH (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)**

Invalid Baptism - On July 16, 2001, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published the following ruling concerning the validity of Mormon Baptism: "D. Whether baptism conferred in the community of 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,' spoken of as 'Mormons', is valid. R. Negative." This ruling reflects a definitive change in the Church's official view of Mormon baptism as defined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

**What this means to you as ministers of the Church:** 1) Converts to Catholicism from the Mormon community must be absolutely baptized when they are received into the Church. If conditional baptism of Mormons is currently conducted, this practice is to cease. 2) For marriages, a Dispensation from Disparity of Worship must be obtained, as is the current practice. 3) For marriage cases coming before the Tribunal, members of the Mormon community are to be considered non-baptized.

### **NAZARENE CHURCH (Church of the Nazarene)**

Valid Baptism - This once familiar denomination seems to be vanishing, and formation is hard to come by. The sect was of Wesleyan descent but of strongly Puritan philosophy. Although once it

was unclear whether or not the Nazarene Church had a valid baptism, the baptism now is considered valid.

### **NESTORIAN CHURCHES (Assyrian Church)**

Valid Baptism - Although the underlying ancient heresy was a different one, these Churches were in the same position as the “monophysite” ones. Now there is an official doctrinal agreement between the Nestorians and the Holy See.

### **NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH (Swedenborgian Church)**

Invalid Baptism - The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stated in 1992 that the baptisms of the New Jerusalem Church are invalid. The first article of the Swedenborgian faith is “That there is one God, in whom there is a Divine Trinity; and that he is the Lord Jesus Christ.”

### **OLD BELIEVERS**

These were a large group who, when the Russian Church reformed itself in 1667, went into the schism rather than accept the changes. Later they split into two groups. The Popovtsy were reconciled with the Russian Church proper in 1881. The Bezpopovtsy became even more fragmented and more extreme. If there are still any people claiming to be Old Believers, their baptism must now be regarded as suspect.

### **OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH (Churches of the “Episcopi Vagantes.”)**

Valid Baptism - But in view of the eccentricities, nothing can be taken for granted. The genuine Old Catholic Church (i.e. that formed by the union of those Catholics who dissented from the Declaration of Papal Infallibility with the remnants of the Jansenists, and which had its Primal See at Utrecht) is an entirely reputable organization whose practices are, in every way, proper. But their reputation has suffered unjustly as a result of the activities of self-styled “old catholic” churches.

Churches of the “Episcopi Vagantes -- There are, or have been, many churches under this heading. They are minute, “do-it-yourself” sects. As an extreme example, one had a total membership of fourteen, of whom eleven were bishops; but not all are quite so outrageous. They claim a genuine Apostolic Succession, although obtained by underhanded means. Their heyday was probably in the 1920s, but they still very much exist. The problem is that large numbers of them include the phrase “Old Catholic” in their titles, while others use “Orthodox” or “Patriarchate,” either as well or instead, and some indeed use “Catholic.” Often they can be spotted by the very cumbersomeness of the names they have assumed. Since people of this nature set great store by “validity” (as opposed to legality and regularity), their baptisms almost certainly are valid.

### **ORTHODOX CHURCHES**

Valid Baptism - But note, there are many self-styled “Orthodox” churches – See below - Churches of the “Episcopi Vagantes.”

The real Orthodox Churches relate to the countries of Eastern Europe, the Near East and Northeast Africa. The only genuine Orthodox Church outside these areas is that of Japan. There is a huge

Orthodox Diaspora in Western Europe and the New World, but it has not been organized into national churches. The people remain subject to the respective metropolitan churches of their forefathers.

Churches of the “Episcopi Vagantes” - There are, or have been, many churches under this heading. They are minute, “do-it-yourself” sects. As an extreme example, one had a total membership of fourteen, of whom eleven were bishops; but not all are quite so outrageous. They claim a genuine Apostolic Succession, although obtained by underhanded means. Their heyday was probably in the 1920s, but they still very much exist. The problem is that large numbers of them include the phrase “Old Catholic” in their titles, while others use “Orthodox” or “Patriarchate,” either as well or instead, and some indeed use “Catholic.” Often they can be spotted by the very cumbersomeness of the names they have assumed. Since people of this nature set great store by “validity” (as opposed to legality and regularity), their baptisms almost certainly are valid.

### **PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES (Church of God)**

Valid Baptism - When Trinitarian Formula is used

Invalid Baptism - When Unitarian Formula is used

There are many groups within Pentecostalism, and their practices vary. Baptism seems, on the whole, to be an ad hoc affair. It is frequently the custom to baptize a new member whether or not he or she already is baptized. Some Pentecostal baptisms probably do fulfill the criteria for validity, but it cannot be taken for granted. Invalid baptism because of the Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion. A dedication ceremony is possible. Infants are not baptized customarily. Baptism through water takes place when a person is mature enough to understand its implications. The method of baptism is not outlined but appears valid.

Invalid Baptism because of the Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion.

### **PEOPLES CHURCH OF CHICAGO (Doctor Preston Bradley)**

A favorable decision was given in such a case. Dr. Bradley himself wrote several letters. He stated that the doctrine of his church on baptism is that it is a naming ceremony, a dedication and consecration of the child, and a commitment of the parents, by teaching and example, to help the child grow in knowledge and love of God. It is not absolutely necessary for salvation. Water is used, but only the name of God the Father is mentioned in the formula.

### **PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT CHURCH**

The baptism certainly is valid in theory, but owing to a degree of volatility among some of the membership, it is not certain that discipline always has been maintained in all congregations. (Not to be confused with the Philippines Episcopal Church, which is Anglican.)

## **PLYMOUTH BRETHREN**

There is little cohesion between different congregations. Some practice baptism of adults; others are more inclusive. But there is no knowing the form baptism would take (or even whether it exists) in any individual community.

## **POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Valid Baptism.

## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Valid Baptism.

## **PROTESTANT CHURCH OF TUVALU**

Valid Baptism

## **QUAKERS (Society of Friends)**

Invalid Baptism - The whole ethos of Quakerism is unstructured, and there is nothing resembling baptism.

Enrollment on Sunday School rolls does not mean baptism. The Friends Church does not observe baptism as an outward rite, but rather as an inward work of God. There are no baptismal records. Baptism is spiritual, and "in no way strengthened by the application of water." The Quakers sometimes are called the Society of Friends. Since no water is used, there is no valid baptism.

## **REFORMED CHURCH (Congregational, Evangelical, United Church of Christ)**

Valid Baptism - But Note: "Some ex-Baptists are members of our Churches who were not baptized on admission to communicant membership" in the Congregationalist Church.

## **REUNIFICATION CHURCH (Moonies)**

Since the basic tenet of this faith is that Christ failed, any initiation rites they have must be unsound.

## **SALVATION ARMY (England and Wesleyan Chapel)**

No Baptism -- There are two branches: 1) Salvation Army, 2) Second Branch.

Although the doctrine of the Army is basically Wesleyan, it has no sacraments. Infants and others are dedicated formally, but this is not a baptism. The Salvation Army Headquarters states they do not have a baptismal service but a religious ceremony, called a dedication service of children, and also a cradle roll. A certificate is issued for the dedication service, but is not to be confused with water baptism.

### **SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS (Adventists)**

Same as Adventists, although the original Adventism died so long ago that there are no living adherents. There is certainly baptism of adults only by water and total immersion. But this church is not in the mainstream of theology, and it is doubtful if its formulae are either uniform or acceptable.

### **SHAKERS (Offshoot of Quakers)**

Invalid Baptism - Although they developed an unorthodox theology, this group was originally an offshoot of the Quakers, and they, likewise, have no baptism.

The whole ethos of Quakerism is unstructured, and there is nothing resembling baptism. Enrollment on Sunday School rolls does not mean baptism. The Friends Church does not observe baptism as an outward rite, but rather as an inward work of God. There are no baptismal records. Baptism is spiritual, and "in no way strengthened by the application of water." The Quakers are sometimes called the Society of Friends. Since no water is used, there is no valid baptism.

### **SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)**

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### **SPANISH REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Valid Baptism

### **SPIRITUALIST CHURCH**

Invalid Baptism - Those spiritualists who belong to the formal sect do not, so far as it is known, practice baptism. In any case, their theology is Unitarian. But the majority of spiritualists are not members of the sect; they belong to any denomination or to none. This second kind of spiritualist, therefore, may well have been baptized in some other denomination.

### **SWEDENBORGIANS (Unitarian Theology)**

Invalid Baptism -- Their baptism was officially notified by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as Invalid in 1992. The first article of the Swedenborgian faith is "That there is one God, in whom there is a Divine Trinity; and that he is the Lord Jesus Christ."

### **THE FAMILY (Children of God)**



Invalid Baptism - If “The Family” should have baptism, this will be invalid for lack of intention. This Sect has three strong characteristics: 1) It has great reverence for the Bible; 2) It repudiates virtually all aspects of orthodox Christianity; 3) It glorifies and practices sexual promiscuity from an early age, which it professes to find enjoined in the Bible.

### **UNITARIAN CHURCHES (Unitarian Universalists and Universalist)**

Invalid Baptism - Most Unitarian Churches do practice baptism and do not use water. But there is no obligatory formula, and, by definition, this denomination rejects any notion of the Trinity.

Universalists and Unitarians voted to merge in May 1960, with the union taking effect in 1961. Even before that time, Universalists favored ultimate salvation and rejected original sin. With time, they denied the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus.

### **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS (Unitarian Churches and Universalists)**

Invalid Baptism - Most Unitarian Churches do not practice baptism, but if they do, there is no obligatory formula, and, by definition, this denomination is Unitarian not Trinitarian.

Universalists and Unitarians voted to merge in May 1960, with the union taking effect in 1961. Even before that time, Universalists favored ultimate salvation and rejected original sin. With time, they denied the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus.

### **UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

Valid Baptism

### **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (Congregational, Evangelical, Reformed Church)**

Valid Baptism - But Note: “Some ex-Baptists are members of our Churches who were not baptized on admission to communicant membership” in the Congregationalist Church.

### **UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (Congregational, Evangelical, Reformed Church)**

Valid Baptism - But Note: “Some ex-Baptists are members of our Churches who were not baptized on admission to communicant membership” in the Congregationalist Church.

### **UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

Valid Baptism

### **UNIVERSALISTS (Unitarian Churches and Unitarian Universalists)**

Invalid Baptism - Universalists and Unitarians voted to merge in May 1960, with the union taking effect in 1961. Even before that time, Universalists favored ultimate salvation and rejected original sin. With time, they denied the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus.

## **WALDENSIANS**

Valid Baptism

## **WELSH CHAPELS (Independent Calvinist Church)**

Valid Baptism - The proper formula is used, and so is water. Although the method of applying the water is at the minister's discretion, the conditions for baptism are fulfilled.

## **ZION CHURCHES (Methodist Church)**

Valid Baptism - Zionism (Not Jewish kind) is a recognized movement within American Methodism.

However, there is a cradle roll, which is a listing of the names of the infants too young to attend Sunday School. This record is kept separate from the baptismal record. In many instances, names appear on both rolls. If it appears on one, it is no indication that it would, or should, appear on the other. Since the church baptizes infants, however, if one is listed on the cradle roll, at least one pastor has stated it would seem to indicate that there was also baptism, which they may or may not have recorded.

Some independent sects seem to have adopted this name, and their practice of baptism is unknown.