

**BAPTIST DISTINCTIVE #2**  
**A REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

**INTRODUCTION**

Many so-called Churches today receive folk into their membership upon ALL kinds of unscriptural bases.

1. Attendance of an instruction class.  
(This usually involves indoctrination into a particular Church's doctrine.)
2. Simply a request to join the Church by someone.
3. Baptism.

**However, we as Baptists receive members in one of three ways:**

1. **Profession of Faith and Baptism.**
2. **Statement of Faith**—The individual testifies that he or she has been saved and scripturally baptized.
  - a. This is used when membership is in a Church of unlike faith and practice.  
  
(However, we seldom use it because of differences in the doctrines of salvation or baptism.)
  - b. This is used when former Church is no longer in existence.
  - c. This is used when a former Church cannot be contacted or fails to respond to a request.
3. **By Letter**—From another Church of like faith and practice.  
(Acts 15:22-23)
  - a. Requires a Previous Profession of Faith and a Scriptural Baptism.
  - b. Requires a Membership in Good Standing.

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Note: Unfortunately, today the practice of transfer of membership by letter has merely become a matter of paper shuffling among Churches and is usually not handled in the Biblical manner for which it was intended.

I want you to note that EACH of these methods we accept members by implies that a person must be saved in order to be a member of the Church.

**The Second Baptist Distinctive Is That: WE BELIEVE IN A REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP!**

**Regeneration**—Literally rebirth, "*Born Again,*" or "*Born From Above*" ( i.e. Speaks of a Spiritual Rebirth!)

Why is it that we practice a "*Regenerated Church Membership?*"

**I. THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES IT.**

**(Matthew 16:16-18)**

**A. As Many As Received Him. (John 1:11-13)**

**1. Born Not Of Blood!**

(i.e. It is not by physical birth or natural descent).  
*Romans 5:12—“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”*

**2. Born Not Of The Will Of The Flesh!**

(i.e. It is not by a natural human desire).  
**Romans 3:10-12.**

**3. Born Not Of The Will Of Man!**

(i.e. It is not by a desire of another.)  
**Psalms 49:6-8.**

You are not saved because someone wants you to be saved. (Example—infant baptism is done at the request of parents to “save” the child.)

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**4. Born of God. (John 3:3-8)**

The birth of a child of God is **not** a natural birth; it is a **supernatural work of God in regeneration!** A person welcomes Jesus and responds in faith and obedience to Him, but the mysterious work of The Holy Spirit is “*the cause*” of regeneration.

**B. By The Washing Of Regeneration And Renewing Of The Holy Ghost. (Titus 3:5)**

*THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES IT!*

**II. THE EARLY CHURCH PRACTICED IT!**

**(Acts 2:41-42, 47; 1 Corinthians 1:2)**

**III. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH NECESSITATES IT!**

**(Matthew 28:19-20)**

**IV. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH DEMANDS IT.**

**(2 Corinthians 6:14-16)**

The Church is to reach the lost but it is not to be unequally yoked with the lost.

**Ephesians 5:11**

**V. FOR THE SAKE OF THE LOST, WE PRACTICE IT.**

**(Matthew 3:7-8)**

Lest we would give the lost a false assurance, let us receive into our Churches only those who can give a clear statement of a living faith in Christ with a life to back it up.