



VERITAS CHURCH

Introduction

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(Romans 12:1-2 ESV)

As Christians, we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and serve in a particular place within the body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8). As with any healthy body, the body of Christ functions best when every member fulfills their role (Eph.4:11-16). Veritas Church holds its members in high regard and encourages them to fulfill their calling as ambassadors of the gospel to the world around them (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

Why a Covenant?

Our covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy, which is found in the presence of the Lord. The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:

- To clarify the biblical expectations for both the elders and the individual members of Veritas Church.
- To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Veritas Church.
- To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

The Veritas Church covenant is comprised of: (1) personal profession of faith, (2) statement of biblical doctrine, (3) the elders' commitment to Veritas Church, and (4) the individual member's commitment to Veritas Church.

Personal Profession of Faith

I am a Christian saved from the eternal wrath of God by faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through his death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (John 3:16-18; Rom. 3:23-26). **I have repented** of my sin against God and fully believe God has made me a new creation by his grace (2 Cor. 5:17). **I believe Jesus** is all that he and the Scriptures claim him to be (Isa. 5:6; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25-26, 6:29, 8:58, 11:25-27, 14:6-7, 15:5). **I have been baptized** in obedience to Scripture to personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and to publicly demonstrate my commitment as a disciple of Jesus (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3; Col. 2:12).

Statement of Biblical Doctrine

I agree with the core beliefs of Veritas Church as expressed in our Statement of Faith.

I agree that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the ultimate doctrinal authority on all matters (Is. 55:11; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12).

I understand that Veritas Church's doctrine is also communicated and specified through various channels such as sermons, published materials, and other writings distributed by Veritas Church.

I understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace without being divisive over secondary issues (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).

The Elders' Commitment

Our Commitment to the Veritas Church Family

We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).

We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).

We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).

We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

My Commitment

My commitment to the Veritas Church Family

I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final authority on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

I will faithfully participate in the life of Veritas Church through weekly gatherings, serving our church and city, and a personal life that glorifies Jesus (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3).

I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5, 8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).

I will protect the unity of Veritas Church by being proactive instead of passive in my investment in the community. I will fight against divisiveness and gossip by being a person of peace and encouraging harmony so far as it is up to me (Romans 12:9-13, 18; Hebrews 10:24-25).

I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin so that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17); I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines.

I understand that this covenant commits me to the family of Veritas Church and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify Veritas Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Veritas Church.

Signature

Date

Name (Print)



MISSION STATEMENT

Veritas Church exists to enjoy God and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ together as a community of redeemed people to the glory of God.

Enjoying God...

The Bible teaches that people were created to enjoy a loving relationship with God. Because of our sin, we are separated from God and instead seek enjoyment in everything else except Him. The good news is that Jesus came, died in our place, and rose again, paying the penalty for sin and bringing us back into a loving relationship with God. We believe this new relationship with God is the source of true joy.

Proclaiming Jesus...

We desire to share the joy of knowing God through the proclamation of the Jesus Christ. We proclaim Jesus with our words by speaking the good news, the gospel, to others. And we proclaim Jesus with our actions by living a life of sacrificial love. We believe that the proclamation of Jesus is the means of knowing God and growing spiritually.

Together...

As followers of Jesus we meet together in various settings to equip and encourage one another toward the goals of enjoying God and proclaiming Jesus. We believe that being part of a community of believers is essential to becoming a mature follower of Jesus.

Veritas Church Statement of Faith

We Believe the Bible to Be the Word of God

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the certain, sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice for all mankind, representing the whole counsel of God concerning everything necessary for His glory and man's salvation; and all things pertaining to godliness and Christian conduct.¹ They constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, written by men as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, free of error in the original manuscripts. Because the Bible is infallible and internally consistent, Scripture is to be interpreted by the whole of Scripture. And, though there may be several applications for any particular passage, there is only one true meaning and it is to be ascertained by means of the grammatico-historical method of interpretation and through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.²

We Believe In God

We believe that there is one true and living God³, eternally existing in three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There are not three Gods, but one, with each person having the whole of the divine essence, yet distinct from one another, not confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.⁴ God, in His nature, is spirit.⁵ He is self-existent⁶, incomprehensible⁷, invisible⁸, everywhere present⁹, all powerful¹⁰, all knowing¹¹, immutable¹², holy¹³, righteous¹⁴, just¹⁵,

¹ 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14, 15; Psalms 19:1-3

² 2 Peter 1:20, 21; John 7:17; John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 2 Timothy 2:15

³ Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4

⁴ 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

⁵ John 4:24

⁶ Job 22:2, 3

⁷ Isaiah 55:8, 9

⁸ Colossians 1:15

⁹ 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23, 24

merciful¹⁶, loving¹⁷ and kind¹⁸. God is ultimately sovereign, ruling the universe according to His own will for the good of His creation and the praise of His glory.¹⁹

We believe in God the Father, uncreated and unbegotten, existing from all eternity. The Father is the sovereign ruler of the universe, ordering, directing, and sustaining all things according to His own will.²⁰ The Father saves all those who come to Him through Jesus Christ from the penalty of sin and makes them His sons and daughters through the spirit of adoption.²¹

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten Son of the Father.²² Jesus Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, possessing all of the divine attributes.²³ Jesus, while on earth, was God incarnate, being born of a virgin and laying aside the prerogatives of deity, but retaining the divine essence.²⁴ We believe in His sinless life, His teachings and miracles, and His atonement through His voluntary, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive death on the cross.²⁵ We believe in the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus and His Ascension to heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father as our advocate.²⁶ We believe that His glorious, visible and bodily return is imminent.²⁷

We believe in the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father.²⁸ The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, possessing all of the attributes and perfections of God. His work includes convicting the world of sin, of

¹⁰ Genesis 17:1

¹¹ Acts 15:18; Psalm 5 147:5; Matthew 10:30; 1 John 15:10

¹² Numbers 23:19; Psalms 33:11; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17

¹³ Isaiah 6:3

¹⁴ Psalms 119:68

¹⁵ Nehemiah 9:32, 33

¹⁶ Psalms 103:6-14; Luke 6:36

¹⁷ 1 John 4:7-11

¹⁸ Exodus 34:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6

¹⁹ 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalms 103:19; Daniel 4:25, 34, 35

²⁰ 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalms 103:19; Daniel 4:25, 34, 35; 1 Corinthians 8:6

²¹ John 1:12; Romans 8:14, 15; Galatians 4:4, 5; Ephesians 1:5

²² John 1:1, 14, 18

²³ John 1:1, 8:38-42; 8:56-58; 9:10:30; 14:9; Colossians 2:9

²⁴ Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1-18; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-3

²⁵ John 10:17; Romans 3:24, 25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; Hebrews 9:14; 10:5-10

²⁶ Mark 16:19; Luke 24:38, 39, 51; John 25:25, 27; Acts 1:9, 10; 2:22-24; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 9:24

²⁷ Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; 5:1-6; Revelation 22:20

²⁸ John 15:26

righteousness, and of judgment.²⁹ He is the sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ³⁰, and indwelling, sanctifying, instructing, gifting, filling, and empowering them for His service.³¹

We Believe That God Created The Heavens and Earth

We believe that God spoke the heavens and the earth into existence, creating them from nothing, in six literal, twenty-four hour days.³² God created everything, visible or invisible, which does exist and continues to uphold His creation by His own power.³³

We Believe That God Created Man In His Own Image

Man and woman were directly and immediately created by God and in the image of God, endowed with intellect, emotion, and a free will.³⁴ In their original condition, Adam and Eve enjoyed fellowship with God, as well as a moral responsibility to obey His commands.³⁵

We Believe That Man Fell, Resulting In Death

Adam and Eve sinned by violating the clear command of God not to eat of the forbidden fruit, resulting in the penalty of spiritual and physical death.³⁶ The effect of sin upon Adam was such that he became totally depraved and incapable of choosing or doing anything pleasing to God, apart from divine grace.³⁷ Through Adam, all mankind receives the consequences of Adam's sin and his corrupt nature, with the exception of Jesus Christ through the Virgin Birth.³⁸

²⁹ John 16:8-11

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 1:5

³¹ John 14:16, 17; Romans 8:9; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18; Ephesians 1:13; 2:19-22; 5:18-21; 1 Peter 4:10

³² Genesis 1

³³ Colossians 1:16, 17

³⁴ Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25

³⁵ Genesis 2:15-17; 3:2, 3

³⁶ Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 6:23

³⁷ Acts 15:11; Romans 5:12-19; 8:7; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:1-7

³⁸ Genesis 6:5; Job 14:1-4; Psalms 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; 3:23; 5:12-19; 8:7; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; Ephesians 2:3

We Believe That God Provided Redemption For Man

Through the shed blood of Christ, God provided redemption from sin and death for all those whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world.³⁹ All men are to be exhorted and commanded to repent and believe the Gospel and those who do so will be justified before God by the imputation of Christ's righteousness.⁴⁰ This salvation cannot be obtained on the basis of any human merit or work, but it is by God's grace alone, through faith.⁴¹ Those whom God saves are sanctified and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live fruitful lives and to ultimately enjoy eternal bliss in His presence.⁴²

We Believe That Christ Jesus Is The Head Of His Church

All those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior are immediately baptized into one spiritual body, the Church, by the Holy Spirit.⁴³ Jesus is the Head of His Body and the believers are His members.⁴⁴ We believe that the universal Church consists of all Christians throughout the world. Although the Church is universal, members of the Body of Christ are to come together regularly in local congregations⁴⁵ for worship and instruction;⁴⁶ ministry and edification through each member's gifts;⁴⁷ and fellowship.⁴⁸ Each local congregation is autonomous, functioning under Christ's sovereign direction. The Lord has committed the oversight of the local Church to His under-shepherds, the elders, and the congregation is to submit to their leadership.⁴⁹ The Church is His espoused Bride, eagerly awaiting the return of the Bridegroom.⁵⁰

³⁹ Ephesians 1:3-12; Romans 8:28-30; 1 Peter 1:1, 2

⁴⁰ Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 17:30, 31

⁴¹ John 1:12; Romans 3:20, 28; 4:3-5; Ephesians 2:8,9; Colossians 2:13, 14; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18, 19

⁴² John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 6:1-22; 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 3:5, 6, 18; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 2:19; Jude 24, 25

⁴³ 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13

⁴⁴ Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:14-16; Colossians 1:18

⁴⁵ Acts 14:23; Romans 3:21-24, 29, 30; 16:5; Galatians 3:28, 29; Philippians 1:1; Hebrews 10:23-25

⁴⁶ Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Ephesians 5:18-21; Colossians 3:15, 16; Titus 1:7-9

⁴⁷ Romans 12:4-21; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 14; 14:12; 1 Peter 4:7-11

⁴⁸ Acts 1:14; 2:42-47; 20:7; 1 John 1:1-7

⁴⁹ Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28-32; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:13-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17, 18; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:1-4

⁵⁰ 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7, 8; 21:1-9

We Believe In Being Baptized And Celebrating The Lord's Supper

We believe that Jesus committed two ordinances to the local church; Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian Baptism is by immersion in water, symbolizing the believer's death, burial, and resurrection in Christ.⁵¹ The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He returns.⁵²

We Believe That The Lord Jesus Will Return

We believe in the imminent, visible, personal, and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ,⁵³ when He will judge both the living and the dead.⁵⁴

We Believe That Man Will Live On In Eternity

Upon death, the souls of the redeemed pass immediately into the presence of Christ, where they experience conscious bliss until the resurrection of their bodies⁵⁵ and the souls of the unsaved pass into conscious torment until the resurrection of their bodies.⁵⁶ All human beings will be resurrected bodily; the unbeliever will be raised to everlasting, conscious punishment in Hell⁵⁷ and the saints of God to conscious joy and fellowship with one another and with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in eternity.⁵⁸ Amen.

⁵¹ Acts 2:38-41; 8:36-39; 10:47, 48; 22:16; Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21

⁵² Matthew 14:22-25; 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

⁵³ Matthew 24:27-31, 37-44; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:27, 28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 4:13-17; 5:1-6; Titus 2:11-13; James 5:7, 8; 1 Peter 3:1-10

⁵⁴ John 5:21-23, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:30, 31; 1 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

⁵⁵ Luke 16:19-31; 23:39-43; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23, 24

⁵⁶ Isaiah 14:4-17; Luke :19-31

⁵⁷ Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; John 5:28, 29; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8

⁵⁸ Daniel 12:12; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:1-7; 22:1-5



VERITAS CHURCH

What Is Baptism?

Baptism is the visual symbol of God's saving work and is commanded by Jesus of all who have placed faith in Him (Matt. 28:19-20). Baptism is designed to be an external picture of the inward reality that a person has placed their faith in Jesus Christ and repented of their sins. The act of baptism identifies an individual with the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 6:1-10; Col. 2:12). We believe that this is best demonstrated by full immersion into water.

Why Should One Be Baptized?

The Bible commands and records that all who have put saving faith in Christ are baptized (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:37-41; 22:16).

That being said, it is important to bear in mind a few helpful truths regarding what Baptism does not do:

- 1.) Baptism Does Not Save.** While salvation is proclaimed in the act of baptism, the act itself is not a guarantee to get into heaven.
- 2.) Baptism Is Not Essential For Salvation.** Without in any way diminishing the obligation and delight of baptism for a believer, it is appropriate to understand that baptism is an act of obedience to Christ's command rather than a prerequisite for salvation.

Who Should Be Baptized?

All who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and have repented of their sins are encouraged to follow Christ's command to be baptized.

Veritas Church practices what is called "believer's" or "confessor's" baptism, which means that we only baptize those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The New Testament portrays a consistent pattern that those who are baptized have already placed faith in Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, received the Word, and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:41; 8:12; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4).

Should A Person Be Rebaptized?

Baptism should be done once. If you had placed genuine faith in Christ before your baptism, there is no need to be baptized again. Often in the Christian life there are seasons of growth and greater periods of maturity. Believers must not be rebaptized each time they experience greater joy and growth in their walk. However, if you believe that your original experience was prior to truly trusting in Christ you should pursue obedience to Christ's command and be baptized.

When Should A Person Be Baptized?

Throughout the New Testament, when an individual becomes a believer, baptism follows soon after their confession of faith (Acts 2:38-41). It is our conviction that a person should be baptized at their first opportunity upon becoming a believer and understanding their need to obey the biblical command to be baptized.

The Practice of Veritas Church:

At Veritas Church, we ask believers wishing to be baptized, to meet with one of the pastors for baptism counseling. First, this practice allows us to discuss the gospel and the meaning of baptism and to teach our theological convictions regarding both. Second, it allows the church the opportunity to celebrate together as a congregation sharing in the joy of a person's obedience and agreeing to walk with him or her in fellowship. Finally, it allows the person being baptized to invite family and friends who will have an opportunity to celebrate and hear the proclamation of gospel.

How Should A Person Be Baptized?

Though other denominations and theological traditions baptize by pouring or sprinkling, Veritas Church practices baptism by immersion. We do so in light of the following considerations:

1.) The Greek word βαπτίζω (baptizo) literally means to plunge, submerge, or immerse.

Our English word baptism is a transliteration of the Greek word, "baptizo". Baptizo was used in Greek literature to describe the act of immersing something in water or another liquid. It later became a technical term that referred specifically to the Christian ordinance of baptism.

2.) The representation of union in Christ's death and resurrection is best expressed through immersion.

Whether buried below or above ground, the symbolism of burial is still that of being placed under something. Likewise, resurrection is accomplished by

coming out of something (whether grave or tomb). Immersion best symbolizes this reality by actually placing the believer under the water and bringing them out (Col. 2:12).

In addition, it is interesting to note the use of water to symbolize judgment in the Scriptures (e.g. the flood of Genesis 6-7 and the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea of Exodus 14). Thus, by passing through the waters of baptism, the believer expresses trust that God's judgment has been satisfied by Christ.

3.) Baptisms in the New Testament suggest full immersion.

Matthew 3:16 - "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately **he went up from the water**, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him..."

Mark 1:5,10 - "And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins... And when **he came up out of the water**, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove."

Acts 8:38-39 - "And he commanded the chariot to stop and they both **went down into the water**, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they **came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing."

Appendix A: How We Baptize At Veritas Church

How Can I Get Baptized?

Anyone interested in being baptized should contact one of the pastors/elders of Veritas church and let them know of your desire to be baptized. The pastor/elder will set up an appointment to interview the candidate. The interview will discuss the candidate's personal testimony and their understanding of baptism.

Baptism and Membership

Baptism is a requirement for membership at Veritas Church. We require anyone wishing to covenant with Veritas Church to have displayed obedience to Christ's command to be baptized following conversion. While we practice a baptism by immersion at Veritas Church, we do not require the mode of immersion for membership. If a person was sprinkled, immersed, or experienced some other mode of baptism after conversion, we will consider this requirement completed.

Helpful Hints:

- 1.) Wear dark shorts, or pants, and a dark shirt to maintain modesty.
- 2.) Bring a change of clothes, towel, and a bag to hold your wet clothes afterwards.

Appendix B: Infant vs. Believer Baptism

As discussed in the section titled “Who Should Be Baptized?” Veritas Church only baptizes those who profess to be believers in the person and work of Jesus Christ. However, not all denominations and traditions follow this practice. Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and a number of other mainline Protestant Denominations practice infant baptism (called paedobaptism from the word “*paidon*” meaning infant or child). While all practice the same form, the underlying theologies of each are quite distinct. Without going into detail regarding each, we will look briefly at the two most common in the particular context of Veritas Church: Roman Catholicism and Protestant Paedobaptism.

Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism teaches that all infants should be baptized and by doing so, the child is regenerated or born again. In the case of infants, who are unable to exercise saving faith, the faith of the church is effective to remove original sin and bestow saving grace.

Our Response:

The faith of another person will not substitute for a person's own response to the gospel, and the baptismal waters hold no magical powers of regeneration.

The Roman Catholic understanding of baptism is precipitated upon the same system of works-righteousness which stands in utter contrast to the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in Galatians, a gospel of works is ultimately “another gospel” to be corrected or condemned.

Protestant Paedobaptism

Protestant paedobaptism prescribes baptism of adults who convert to Christianity but differs in practice from those who perform believer's baptism by additionally prescribing infant baptism for children of believing parents. This view is founded upon three main arguments:

1. Infants were circumcised in the Old Covenant as a sign of being a part of the covenant community.
2. Baptism is the sign of the New Covenant as circumcision was the sign of the Old.
3. There is essential continuity between the Old and New Covenants.

This discussion centers on the degree of continuity between the Old and New Covenants. Within the Old Covenant, Israel was commanded to circumcise their sons on the eighth day as a sign and seal of their being included within God's covenant with the nation. Protestant paedobaptism interprets baptism as the new form of circumcision (using Colossians 2:11-12 as a reference) and teaches that the sign and seal should be performed for children of New Covenant believers, as well. As Acts 2:39 states, "the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off."

OUR RESPONSE:

1.) The Old Covenant community was primarily entered into physically (by birth), whereas the New Covenant is entered into spiritually (by rebirth – being "born again").¹⁶ Whereas Protestant paedobaptism prescribes baptism for those in physical infancy, credo-baptism (believer's baptism) insists upon the baptism of those in spiritual infancy, having been born again through the Holy Spirit.

2.) The Old Covenant community was a mixed community composed of both believers and unbelievers (Romans 2:29, 9:6). The New Covenant community is technically a congregation of believers (Jeremiah 31:34).

3.) Though there is a great degree of continuity between the covenants, there is also substantial discontinuity. The Old Covenant consisted of shadows which pointed to the substance fulfilled in Christ (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1). We need to be careful about directly applying elements of the Old Covenant without recognizing the essential distinctions.

4.) Passages such as Acts 2:39 do not affirm the paedobaptist position. The "promise" affirmed is the promise of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4 and 2:33), and it is specifically applied to "everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." The fact that the promise is for "your children" should no more lead us to thinking that all children are covenant community members as the fact that it is for "all who are far off" should lead us to conclude that all people everywhere are. The passage teaches that the Holy Spirit will be given to all whom Christ calls to Himself, not that we should baptize children.

What About Household Baptisms?

Though the explicit mention of the baptism of an entire household is only made in the two accounts in Acts 16, the narrative of Cornelius' conversion probably implies the same. Proponents of infant baptism (paedobaptism) believe that such baptisms can be used as implicit justification for infant baptism. If households were baptized and if those households included infants, we have biblical evidence of paedobaptism. What are we to make of these claims? Here are a few thoughts:

First, it must be noted that the entire argument is founded upon the presumed presence of infants within the household. The text itself does not necessitate such

a reading. There is no convincing evidence of infants in the households (though to be fair, there is no explicit statement otherwise either).

Second, the passages in question have clues, which suggest that all who were baptized had been converted.

Summary:

While the timing and mode of baptism are not absolutely essential to the Christian faith, they are nonetheless important theological convictions that we hold firmly. We love and respect our Protestant brothers and sisters who disagree with believer's baptism, but we believe and subsequently teach it as the biblical form of baptism.