

How to Increase Baptisms in General Baptist Churches

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When Church Growth Reports from 2005 were analyzed I found that of the 621 reports submitted as of September, 2006 only 137 churches reported baptizing 12 or more people in the calendar year 2005.

246 churches reported 0 baptisms. 519 churches reported 6 or fewer baptized in 2005.

How might the concerned pastor increase baptisms in a local church? Here's a simple strategy.

First, know who needs to be baptized. Church management software or a computer spreadsheet can be used to track baptism dates in the middle sized or larger church. In the small to middle sized church a card file or a clip board can be used to record baptism dates. A quick look at the lists will show who has a baptism date and who does not have a baptism date. **Anyone who attends the church and does not have a baptism date is then a candidate for an invitation to be baptized!**

Second, when you baptize do it during Morning Worship. This allows public exposure to one of the most powerful symbols of the Christian faith as new believers are "Buried now with Christ; raised to walk a brand new life!" It is foolish to schedule baptism as a private, secret rite for this is not the New Testament pattern of public profession of a life changing faith.

Third, when you baptize take pictures or video and use them in subsequent services or newsletters or bulletins. This allows those who were absent to share in the celebration. Many churches with multiple services schedule baptism in the service the person usually attends and then share the video segment in the other worship services so the entire local body can celebrate. The more people see the powerful symbol of baptism the more likely they are to respond positively to the invitations offered in suggestion number one.

Fourth, maintain a regular schedule for baptism services. Even the smallest church could offer two or three planned times for baptism every year. For many years I operated on a Spring, Summer and Fall schedule of baptism services. This allowed many of those services to include 6-8 being baptized rather than just the one or two that might otherwise have responded to an immediate need.

Fifth, develop a brochure or bulletin announcement or newsletter article that explains why believers should be baptized. This can easily be developed from the baptismal counseling materials already available for those who are being invited under suggestion one.

Sixth, at least once a year preach on baptism. This works well in July on the Sunday closest to July 4. These services often focus on our national symbols "Red White and Blue Day" and can easily be adapted to include our Christian symbols of Communion and Baptism.

Seventh, pray that the Lord of the Harvest will himself bless your planting and watering and watering and planting with his heaven sent increase.