RCC Position Statement on Baptism

Within orthodox Protestant Christianity different interpretations of the proper practice of baptism exist. Ordinarily, denominations have doctrinal statements that establish and govern its beliefs and common practices regarding the ordinance of baptism. Being a non-denominational church, Redeemer Community Church is not required to adhere to a predetermined confession of faith. During the creation of RCC, the founding members desired to create a Confession of Faith (CoF) that is both faithful and charitable, making certain that primary gospel issues are not compromised, while not being dogmatic about secondary issues. That being said, the leadership within RCC hold to a unanimous view on baptism that is not stated in the CoF. The purpose of this document is to clarify RCC’s position on baptism and the position of its leadership, and determine how that affects the practices (ecclesiology) of the church.

To summarize as succinctly as possible, the Bible makes normative the idea that all believers are baptized. Therefore, we believe that all members are to have been baptized, and the RCC Church Covenant makes that assumption in the opening statement.

Where some people differ is in the practice of believing parents baptizing their infant children (pedobaptism) and baptizing people upon a later confession of faith (credobaptism). Many evangelical Christian churches agree that the practice of baptism is not salvific, meaning it is not an act that imparts saving grace in any way. To state this differently, a person’s salvation does not ultimately depend on their being baptized.

Within Protestantism there are two primary traditions regarding baptism as stated above Pedobaptism is typically administered within a covenantal framework as a covenant declaration between the church and the believing family for the sake of the child. This is a covenant between God, the church, and family to raise the child within the teachings of the church awaiting the day upon which the child professes faith in Jesus. Their salvation still awaits the profession of faith by the individual. Credobaptism, on the other hand, is a public sign and seal after one comes to faith, declaring that one’s sinful flesh has been put to death and raised to new life in Christ. Again, salvation comes with the profession of faith.

RCC’s Confession of Faith infers that all believers are baptized, which is supported by the whole of scripture, regardless of which mode one might affirm. While most denominations make a distinction between which mode of baptism is practiced, RCC does not make that distinction in its CoF. This requires that charity be applied to each member’s convictions regarding baptism.

Although the CoF is open for the purpose of charity, the elders and current leadership team all share the conviction that credobaptism is the normative biblical pattern for baptism. As such, leaders at RCC will not perform pedobaptism, even at the request of a member family that holds to a paedobaptist conviction and might desire for their children/infants to be baptized.

No distinction is made between believers in RCC that hold different baptism views. We are all one in Christ, called to unity.

Because we believe believer’s baptism to be the normative biblical practice, we believe it is permissible and desirable to encourage one who has received infant baptism to consider and study believer’s baptism. As a congregation we will continue to teach and encourage the practice of believers’ baptism however it is not strictly required for church membership.

Clearly there is a tension to be held within RCC, with the CoF and convictions of each member and those of RCC’s elders. The solution is open dialogue between members and leadership. As we endeavor to faithfully obey the commands of the Bible, we must allow the Bible to have ultimate authority or our beliefs and actions, rather than heritage or tradition. That being said, RCC recognizes that people will arrive at different convictions on the issue of baptism (as well as other non-primary non-gospel issues), even after personal study and prayer on the issue.

Our hope is that each member will prayerfully study the topic of baptism, be open to allowing the Holy Spirit to inform your convictions and possibly even change your convictions. May we unite around the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and not be distracted or disunited by our differing opinions of issues which are not essential for salvation.