

# **Believer's baptism sacrament or symbolic ordinance?**

April 22, 2010

When Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), the earliest believers clearly understood baptism to be an important expression of faithfulness to him. Baptists stand in this heritage.

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# **Analysis: Should Baptist churches adopt open membership? Yes.**

April 22, 2010

Perhaps the time has come for Baptists today to ask in the same spirit whether or not Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians and others who are genuinely committed disciples of Jesus Christ are true Christians and have been accepted by the grace of the Triune God into the one universal church.

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# **Analysis: Should Baptist churches adopt open membership? No.**

April 22, 2010

Should Baptist churches be encouraged to adopt open membership, or are there good reasons for not doing so? I would like to offer five of the latter.

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# **Churches try varied ways to approach question of membership and baptism**

April 22, 2010

Baptism and local church membership have been inextricably linked historically in the minds of many Baptists. But that view is shifting as a decline in denominational loyalty and the easy movement of American Christians among churches of all stripes have created what writer Phyllis Tickle is calling the “great emergence”—a swirling convergence of denominational traditions toward a spiritual Christian core.

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# **First-person reflection: Visiting an old Landmark**

April 22, 2010

Most of the baptisms I had seen over the years were not adults but children, some at a very young age. I am sure a preschooler can believe that Jesus is his Savior, but I wonder how much it really means when she also believes in Santa Claus or that storks deliver babies.

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## **Faith Digest**

April 22, 2010

Muslims in England are demanding the British army apologize for using apparent replicas of mosques for target practice on a firing range.

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## **Spring marks the opening of the "Church of Baseball"**

April 22, 2010

On Easter Sunday, 50,000 people packed into Angel Stadium in Anaheim, Calif., and heard Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., compare the striking similarities between baseball and religious life.

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# **Musician helps young girls realize God's design on their lives**

April 22, 2010

As Francesca Battistelli performs concerts around the country, she shares life lessons, hoping to encourage young girls with the message that God has a plan and purpose for their lives—and they should settle for nothing less than what God has designed for them. 

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# **Barna: Four in 10 'unchurched' have been hurt by churches**

April 22, 2010

Nearly four of every 10 "unchurched" Americans avoid worship because of negative past experiences in churches or with church people, according to new research by The Barna Group.

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# **A culture of debt, a culture of thrift**

April 22, 2010

Hard work, thrift and philanthropy seem counter-cultural in a time and place where debt is pervasive, with individuals, families, companies and even the government borrowing increasing amounts of money.

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## **Analysis: Churches can help poor people avoid predatory lending trap**

April 22, 2010

Payday loan outlets have grown like kudzu in recent years. Texas has more payday lender outlets—about 3,000—than it has McDonald's and Whataburger restaurants combined.

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# **Churches wrestle with drop in donations**

April 22, 2010

The number of churches that reported a drop in giving due to the sour economy rose nearly 10 percent last year, according to new survey.