

Deepening Our Commitment: Offering Full Immersion Baptism for Re-Dedication

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Dear Honourable Bishop Rodney Weber,
Brother in Christ

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you as a long-time attender of our church community, deeply grateful for the spiritual nourishment and fellowship I have received over the years. During our most recent conversation, we discussed the possibility of me receiving a baptism without becoming a full member due to my adherence to the Nazarite vow. It is with this deep respect and appreciation that I present to you an idea I believe could enrich our spiritual practices and bring a new dimension to our collective journey of faith.

Our church, situated so beautifully near the Sauble River, provides a unique opportunity to explore the practice of full immersion baptism as an adjunct to our traditional sprinkling baptism. I propose that we consider offering full immersion baptism as an optional ceremony for those seeking a profound act of re-dedication or spiritual renewal, or for those who are seeking to dedicate themselves to Christ but are unable to become full members.

1 Biblical and Theological Basis

The practice of full immersion baptism is richly supported by scripture and has deep symbolic meaning. In the New Testament, we see examples such as Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:16) and the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip

(Acts 8:38-39). These instances highlight the significance of full immersion as a powerful representation of death, burial, and resurrection in Christ (Romans 6:3-4).

2 Local Significance and Accessibility

The Sauble River, located next to our church, is an important and accessible site that could beautifully serve this purpose. There is access to the river through the Tara Conservation Area, which is just a few hundred meters from the church. This proximity would allow us to conduct full immersion baptisms conveniently. Additionally, the Arran Lake Conservation Area, which has a beach and permits unsupervised swimming, provides another excellent location for these ceremonies. The water in Arran Lake warms up quickly and is quite warm during the summer months, allowing for a pleasant immersion experience. It's also worth noting that Arran Lake usually has very few, if any, other beachgoers, providing a private and serene setting.

3 Addressing Concerns About Modesty

I am aware of the complicated feelings within our church community regarding mixed-gender swimming and the importance of modesty in dress. Full immersion baptisms can be conducted in a way that respects these values. We can ensure that appropriate, modest attire is worn by all participants. Many conservative Christian groups use baptismal robes that cover the body modestly, and we can adopt a similar practice. We can also provide separate changing areas for men and women to maintain privacy.

4 Personal Perspective on Hair Length

Although I am unable to become a member due to the requirement to cut hair—a man-made rule—I follow God's Nazarite vow, which includes not cutting my hair (Numbers 6:5). I have investigated Paul's

question about hair length and found that contrary to the implication of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15, God actually favors people with long hair. This is evident throughout the Bible, where many prophets and kings had long hair.

While the Bible does not specifically comment on Jesus' hair, it can be presumed it was much like that of rabbis, who traditionally have long hair and beards. Additionally, most Orthodox depictions of Jesus show Him with long hair and a beard. Historically, those with long hair have often been seen as spiritually strong and favored by God, whereas short hair is a more recent phenomenon, often associated with subservience to worldly authority. I have enclosed a timeline document detailing this perspective for your review.

Despite this, I would be able to participate in the adjunct practice of full immersion baptism, as it aligns with my spiritual convictions and respects my adherence to the Nazarite vow.

5 Complementary Practice

I want to emphasize that this proposal is not intended to replace our cherished tradition of sprinkling baptism but to complement it. Full immersion baptism can serve as an additional practice for those who feel led to experience this profound act of re-dedication. It is a deeply symbolic way to renew one's commitment to Christ and can enrich our members' spiritual journeys.

6 Implementation

I suggest we introduce this practice thoughtfully and respectfully:

1. **Educational Sessions:** Organize Bible studies and workshops to explore the biblical and historical contexts of full immersion baptism.
2. **Testimonies:** Share personal stories and testimonies from individuals who have found full immersion baptism to be spiritually renewing.
3. **Special Services:** Offer full immersion baptism during specific church events or re-dedication ceremonies, making use of our proximity to the Sauble River and Arran Lake.

7 Invitation to Dialogue

I am eager to discuss this proposal further and answer any questions or concerns you and the church leadership may have. My hope is that we can have an open and respectful dialogue about how this practice might enrich our community's spiritual life.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to the possibility of exploring this meaningful practice together and am excited about the potential for spiritual growth and renewal it offers to our congregation.

In Christ's love and service,

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