

## **PCCO Communion & Baptism Policy (DRAFT 4/9/2013)**

### **Purpose:**

This document is to set forth a draft policy for the Council to discuss, pray, and decide on with regards to who can take communion during our communion services as well as the related issue of the minimum age of baptism at our church.

### **Proposal:**

The pastors propose that we shall require baptism before taking of communion at our communion services, with the single exception of people who are in the active process of getting ready to be baptized (i.e. in new life class, preparing for the immediate upcoming baptism). Thus, the requirement for taking communion at our church can be listed as the bulleted items below:

1. A believer in Jesus who has obeyed the command of our Lord Jesus to be baptized (or is in the process of preparing for the immediate upcoming baptism). (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38)
2. A believer who has taken the time to examine him/herself carefully, and confessed any known sin, especially sins of unforgiveness of other brothers and sisters. (1Cor. 11:27-29, Matt. 5:22-24)

### **Rationales:**

1. While baptism is not required for salvation (Eph. 2:8-9), it is often linked with salvation as an immediate act following the salvation decision (Acts 2:38, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:38, 10:47, 16:15, 16:33, 18:8, 19:5)
2. To be baptized is an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus, and the Bible does warn us to examine ourselves and be in right relationship of obedience to our Lord Jesus before we partake communion (Matt. 28:19, 1Cor 11:27-29).
3. Baptism and the process of preparing for baptism can often serves as an effective line of demarcation/rite of passage. For children who grew up in the church, as well as for some adults, this can help them to clarify where they truly stand in terms of their faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Related Issue of Minimum Age for Baptism:**

1. The implementation of the above policy will likely raise the question for some parents and children of when a child is allowed to be baptized. The pastors propose the general minimum age of 13. Exception can be made on a case by case basis.
2. For those who are under 18 permission from their parents will be required. The CYM pastor will communicate with the parents regarding this matter.
3. The child/youth who wishes to be baptized will go through the same application and interview process as the adults, but the interview will always be conducted by the CYM pastor with one other church leader present.
4. The child/youth will prepare for baptism by going over the meaning, requirement, and process of baptism with the CYM pastor instead of the adult new life class.

**Timeline and Process of Implementation:**

1. Council discusses and decides on this policy on 4/11/2013 Council meeting.
2. Pastors communicate this decision to the core teams via email immediately following the 4/11/2013 Council meeting.
3. Pastors communicate/teach this policy starting the next communion (Chinese congregation on May 5<sup>th</sup>, OIF on May 19<sup>th</sup>) and continue to do so at all the following communions.