

MISSIO DEI CHURCH

The Importance of Baptism

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What is the Covenant of Grace?

In the gospels Jesus left us two great signs to be observed until he returns, the Lord's Supper and Baptism. These two new covenant signs broadly correspond to the old covenant signs of circumcision and Passover. We call baptism and the Lord's Supper covenant signs because that is what God himself calls them. They are signs of his covenant relationship to those he loves, his people.

The term covenant¹ is a very frequent word in the Bible. In fact, God's covenant with believers is so important that it is nearly impossible to correctly understand the Bible while ignoring it. The covenant of grace² describes the way God relates to his people. It involves a binding oath between God and his people in which he promises his people to be their God and his people, in response to God's grace, swear complete fidelity to God. The covenant of grace was signed and sealed in blood.

God made a covenant of grace with Adam, after the fall, in the garden. He made a promise to save and preserve Noah through the flood and us after it. He promised to be a God to Abraham and his children. With each the promise God attached conditions. The first is saving faith, which God works in us (Romans 4:3). The second is to make use of the covenant signs and seals. In Genesis 17 God spoke to Abraham about his covenant:

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.... My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.

God gave a bloody mark as a sign to Abraham that he and his children belonged to God. Similarly, in Exodus 12:1-13; 21-29, 43-51; God remembered his covenant with Abraham.

¹ **Covenant:** A formal agreement or treaty between two parties that establishes a relationship and in which obligations and mutual responsibilities may be enacted.

² **Covenant of Grace:** The relationship into which God entered to provide, by grace, the promise of salvation to sinful humanity. It extends throughout the Old Testament by means of various covenants to its final fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

God also instituted an annual celebration to remind his people how he mercifully and graciously redeemed his people from bondage in Egypt. As a sign and seal³ of his saving grace he instituted the sacrament of Passover along with many other feasts.

The Passover⁴ had many of the same characteristics as the circumcision. Both the Passover and circumcision were bloody and associated with God's covenant promises. Passover (like the other feasts) differed from circumcision, however, in the same way that baptism and the Lord's Supper differ. Circumcision, the first covenant sign, was applied to infants and adults alike and was a mark of entrance into God's covenant people.

The Passover feast was restricted to those who are able to understand God's redeeming acts because it was a sign designed to nurture and lead to growth. It was not a sign of entrance into visible covenant assembly of God's people, but served as a means of renewing the covenant of grace.

Is there still a Covenant of Grace?

Just as God made a covenant with Abraham, he promised a new covenant to come later. He made this new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus consciously and specifically established "the new covenant."⁵ The Apostle Paul said he was "a servant of the new covenant." How can this be if there is but one covenant of grace? The new covenant is new, as contrasted with Moses, but not as contrasted with Abraham or Adam.

This is the point of Galatians 3:1-29; 4:21-31, and 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 where Paul says that the glory of the Old Covenant⁶ was fading but the glory of the New Covenant is permanent. The message of Hebrews chapters 3-10 is that the Old Covenant (under Moses) was preparatory to the New Covenant. The fundamental theme of Hebrews 11 is that Abraham had a new covenant faith, that is, he anticipated a heavenly city and to the redemption which we have in Christ.

The promise remains, the circumstances change

Now that the promise of the covenant of grace has been fulfilled the circumstances of the covenant have changed. We who live on this side of the cross view things differently because we live in the days of fulfillment. In biblical terms, we live in the "last days." We have the completed Bible and the gift of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

³ **Sign and seal:** A sign is a biblically important event or action that points to God's intentions or presence while a seal is the identifying mark to signify authenticity, authority, or the confirmation of a relationship. John Calvin (1509 – 64) saw the sacraments as "signs and seals" of grace.

⁴ **Passover:** The Jewish commemoration of the "passing over" of the angel of death prior to the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12:13, 23).

⁵ **New Covenant:** The anticipated action of God in establishing a personal relationship with people (Jeremiah 31:31 – 34), seen in Christianity as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The term is used by Jesus in relation to his death (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25) and elsewhere in the New Testament for the effects Jesus brings (Hebrews 8:8 – 13; 10:16 – 17; 12:24).

⁶ **Old Covenant:** The Old Covenant denotes God's covenantal relations with Israel as the people of God. It contrasts with and prepares for God's New Covenant in Jesus Christ.

The old covenant was designed to direct attention forward to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. The old signs like Passover and circumcision⁷ along with the other bloody sacrifices and ceremonies have been replaced. Yet we still live in covenantal arrangement with God, and the bloody pictures of Christ have been replaced with bloodless signs (reminders) and seals.

Why is the Covenant of Grace important?

Because it is a comprehensive category in Scripture, without which the Bible cannot be understood rightly. For example, because God administers his salvation through the covenant, and because there is but one Covenant of Grace, there is one salvation, one gracious promise (Christ) and people of God. Thus, the covenant of grace unifies all of Scripture. God made a salvation promise to Adam and Eve. He repeated the promise to Abraham, whom Paul called "the father" of all believers. All believers are saved because of God's faithfulness to his covenant promise.

The covenant of grace is important because it also explains the Christian life. The God we serve is he who graciously and sovereignly saved us. Just as the way of salvation for Adam was the same as for us (faith in the finished work of Christ), the moral standards of the Christian life are substantially the same from age to age.

The covenant of grace is central to our self-understanding as Christians. God is covenant making and keeping God, and we are his covenant people.

What do we mean by infant baptism?

In all the manifestations of the covenant of God with humans, it is obvious that the one initiating this new relationship is God himself, and not the individual. God sought out Adam and Eve after they had hidden themselves because of the sin they had committed. God chose and spoke to Noah when he least expected it. God looked for Abraham and called him to a pilgrimage that in reality was his search for God, and through which he found not only the land, but also his God. God called Moses on Mount Horeb. God, through Samuel, chose and prepared David to reign. God is the one who remained faithful when Israel abandoned the covenant. God is the one who "so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

In baptism we need to emphasize that the sacrament involves first and foremost God's initiative, and not the person's faith-response. Immersionists have made immersion a testimonial of the faith of the believer, a test of the devotion of the individual, where he or she demonstrates his or her covenant with God. Nothing could be further from the primary emphasis of the Scriptures. Baptism is not the individual's action, but God's. The individual is baptized. This is a passive term. Baptism is something that is done to the one baptized, something that the one being baptized receives, not something that he or she does. God initiates, God does it. The one being baptized only receives the grace conferred.

⁷ **Circumcision:** Removal of the male foreskin as a sign of the covenant in the Old Testament Israel (Genesis 17:9 – 14). It signifies membership within the Jewish community.

However, though in second place, the covenant is also a call of God to the person to respond in faith, to conversion, to change their life style, life direction and life priorities. Repentance and conversion are intimately related to baptism. In receiving the grace of God, the individual responds in faith, in commitment, in repentance, in change. And this change is not only in the terms of the heart that accepts what God offers. This conversion is much more – it is a commission to fulfill the mission that God ascribes to the believer at the moment of making a covenant with the person. God’s covenant involves both election for salvation and election to participate in God’s mission to the world.

Adam received his responsibilities regarding his family and farming. Noah received his instructions about the animals that he was to save in the ark. Abraham received instructions about his family, his posterity, and the Promised Land. “And in you all the nations of the earth will bless themselves” was God’s word to Abraham. Moses received his commission to liberate the Israelite people from the oppression that they were suffering in Egypt – and to proclaim in Egypt that only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was the true God. Israel, with Joshua, received instruction, mission, covenant, and commission to possess the Promised Land. David was commissioned to be the legal and ceremonial king of Israel, and to lead the People of God in the ways of Jehovah to continue his lineage in the reign, showcasing God’s grace and mercy before the nations that surrounded them. And Jesus, in his baptism, was commissioned to die. Jesus identified with sinners, those who only deserved death, who could in Jesus, by grace through faith receive new life.

So we see that the covenant demonstrated in baptism has two sides:

1. **The initiative:** power, grace, commission, and mission come from God.
2. **The response:** repentance for pardon, conversion, and participation in God’s mission are received by the covenant community of faith, the Church, and this includes the believing parent/s of the infant.

The Reformed tradition holds that on the basis of the faith of the parents and through the faith of the Church in Christ, its Head, the infant is received as a “member” of the faith community, and the community receives the covenant in the name of the infant being baptized. It is likened to someone giving a gift that is for an infant. It may be a ball or a bicycle. The infant is too small to know that this is a gift. So the parent receives the gift in the name of the child, to give it to him or her when ready to play with this gift. The gift is in reality for the child, but the believing community includes the believing parents who receive God’s promises for the infant in order to give it to the infant later on, at an appropriate time.

Yet to be a “member” in the sense of the child does not have the same meaning as it does with reference to adults who have publicly professed their faith in Jesus Christ and become “members” of the church. Thus we have the category “non-communicant member” at Missio Dei Church and in the Reformed Church in America (RCA) to signal this difference. If this difference is ignored or downplayed, the infant’s being declared a “member” is equivalent to a Christianization theology of infant baptism, something the Reformed tradition has never accepted. To blur these two meanings of “member” creates confusion.

In baptizing the child, the Church and the parents receive the gift that is given from God in the covenant of grace. This gift is kept until it can be given to the child when he or she can understand. That is, the parents are not responding for the child before God, nor are they annulling the faith of the child. Rather, the parents, as believers, and the Church, as the Body of Christ, receive the grace of God as a gift that will be given later to the child, upon the belief of the child, once the child is old enough to receive it.

In the Old Testament, each one of the persons with whom God made a covenant received the covenant not only for themselves, but for their entire house. Therefore Abraham could circumcise all the males that were under his care, including his servants. Similarly, Moses, for example, received the Tables of the Law, the plan for the Tabernacle, and all the ceremonial laws for all Israel. This has to do with the principle of solidarity that presupposes a corporate understanding of the faith community. In the New Testament, this corporate People of God is the Church. The church and the parents receive the covenant to give the knowledge of this covenant to the child as the child grows up.

A Reformed view of infant baptism involves a strongly corporate understanding of the Church. In our present pre-Christian environment, this will necessitate a significant amount of teaching, although many post-moderns tend to be more open to a corporate understanding of reality than their parents.

Even when we understand the corporate people of God receiving the promise of the covenant for the entire community, including the infant, we still must consider the eventual confession of faith of the child. As an infant, the child has still not yet confessed his or her faith nor received the benefits of the covenant on his or her own account. Remember the cases of Isaac and Jacob – Ishmael and Esau. And remember the Pharisees standing before John the Baptist. John affirmed that although they had Abraham as their father, they could not escape the necessity to repent, ask for God's pardon, and live a life full of the fruits of repentance. If we are to avoid baptismal regeneration⁸ or Christianization and the decline that accompanies such a view, we must still consider the issue of the confession of faith on the part of the baptized infant.

A way to resolve this situation is by giving due emphasis to the eventual confession (or confession) of faith on the part of the one baptized. We could say that in the case of infant baptism, the baptism takes place in two parts: The sprinkling of the infant is linked to that child's eventual confession of faith later on. In this sense we can bring together the person's faith-response with God's initiative of establishing a covenantal relationship with the child. But we do not do this often. We place great emphasis on the baptism of the child. But in the RCA we have tended to downplay the child's anticipated – in fact, expected – personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ several years later.

We must amplify our idea of infant baptism by including more intentionally the person's eventual profession of faith. In baptizing infants, in reality we anticipate the day in which they, by their own accord, will respond in faith to God's covenant with them. This is a baptism that looks to the

⁸ **Baptismal regeneration:** The belief that salvation is conferred through baptism (see John 3:5 and Titus 3:5). This view has been prominent in Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism.

future, expecting its completion in the profession of faith of the individual that is baptized. We might say that upon making the profession of faith, a child of the church is ratifying and fulfilling what is promised at baptism. A promise without fulfillment is an empty promise. Fulfillment without the promise does not make sense. The two must be kept together.

So if the parents and Missio Dei Church together accept the gift of God's grace for the infant, there is also a very serious commitment on the part of the parents and MDC to see that this promise of the covenant, this commitment to receive God's grace by faith, is fulfilled, completed on the day when the child to make his or her own profession of faith.

The children of believers need to be given the possibility of saying "no" to God's offer. And they need to be encouraged to say "yes," to respond in faith-commitment and faith-confession to God's covenantal grace.

If our baptized children never profess their faith, their baptism itself loses significance, meaning and validity, because there is no reciprocating faith on their part to respond to God's grace. What can we say about the thousands of baptized children in our RCA churches who never appropriate personally their spiritual birthright because they never make their own personal confession of faith, never commit themselves in covenant with God, and never take their place in the commission and mission of God to the world? Their baptism as infants has lost its significance. The seed of infant baptism must grow, develop and mature into a life consecrated to God. The confession of faith on the part of the infant at an appropriate age is essential. The child can then understand the promise and blessing that was received by the faith community, the Church, at baptism and an infant. God's promises that were received then on the basis of God's Covenant are now fulfilled.

As a church, we urgently need to develop an in-depth teaching and discipling of our baptized children. We need to constantly teach them the importance and the significance of baptism that they have received as infants, and the covenant that God has made with them. It is imperative that we carefully bring them to the moment when they will be ready to receive by faith and commitment the fulfillment of the promise that was made years earlier in their baptism. To effect this teaching in the home and in the church, we also need to be completely convinced of the importance of baptism to our children.

Why baptize infants?

Often it is asked, "Where in the New Testament are we commanded to baptize children?" While there are many ways to answer this question, it is a wrong question. The Old Testament maintains overwhelming continuity with the New Testament, and continuity ought to be the default assumption. The question should rather be, "Where does the New Testament command us to stop applying the covenant sign to children of believers?" Since we have not been commanded to stop applying the covenant sign to the children of believers, why should we celebrate the promise of God's covenantal care by baptizing infants?

- Because the promise exists: It has been made by God.
- Because it is a sign of the covenant that is a reality by God's grace and election.

- Because both the parents and the church are responsible to fulfill the implications of the covenant in the life of the child.
- Because it is the seal, the earnest to affect the fulfillment of the promise -- it is the first indication of the second part.
- Because of God's command.
- For the proclamation to all nations of the Gospel of God's love.
- Because in the celebration of infant baptism the parents and the faith community, the Church, commit themselves to participate in God's mission to the nations.

Why emphasize the profession of faith?

This question is important because in our day there are many children of the church who never confess their faith in Christ. It is as if they were "Christianized" as children, making it seem that they do not need the second part of professing their own faith before many witnesses. It is at this point that the immersionists tell us that infant baptism has lost its validity – because it does not come to fulfillment in confession of a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, clearly, in the New Testament salvation is received by faith, confessed with the lips, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Why emphasize the confession of faith?

1. Because the child has the duty and right to freely seek the benefits of his or her baptism, and appropriate them to his or her own life.
2. Because this gives the person baptized as an infant the option to say "no" – or to personally appropriate the promise – it gives the person a choice. Of course, we know that it is by God's election and through the grace-filled operation of the Holy Spirit that the person is able to say "yes" to God's covenantal promises.
3. Because the grown child now can respond personally to God's covenantal initiative.
4. Because the infant, once grown, commits him/herself to God, to the church, and to God's mission to the nations.
5. Because the child, the parents, and the People of God in the act of profession of faith, celebrate and give thanks for the fulfillment of a promise made years before in baptism.
6. Because the fulfilled promise is sealed in the heart of the child by the Holy Spirit, for this person and his or her children – and is sealed in the hearts of the congregation.
7. Because public confession of faith in Jesus Christ is commanded by God.
8. Because public confession of faith in Jesus Christ is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the nations.

What about baptizing adult believers?

While the Missio Dei Church comes out of a tradition in which infant baptism has been the primary understanding and practice, we also trust that Missio Dei Church will witness many new live in Christ as God works in the lives of those who have not yet trusted in his grace. With new life in Christ, we offer the opportunity for new adult believers to be baptized. In the case of an adult converted when grown, the two parts – the promise and the fulfillment of baptism – are joined in a single act at the same instant in baptism and confession. Baptism and confession of faith are simultaneous.

Parents who do not hold to infant baptism are given the option of not baptizing their infant(s); however, a traditional dedication will not be offered as an option.

Baptizing believing children⁹

We are open to baptizing younger children but strongly encourage children to wait until at least junior high. There are at least four things to wait for.

1. Wait for Understanding

Children can confess faith in Christ when they are very young but they will likely not be able to contemplate the significance of the baptism until they are older. It is important for children to understand the meaning of the ordinance and also have enough maturity to understand the significance of this act of obedience.

2. Wait for More Independent Thinking

It is not uncommon for those who were baptized during their pre-teen years to feel a need to be "re-baptized" when they are older. Memories of the first decade of our lives are often fuzzy at best. Even if we do remember a decision or an event like baptism, we usually cannot recall any reasoning behind the decision or event. Once a young person has the capacity for reasoning and for more independent thinking they are more likely to embrace the decisions and commitments they make as their own. Therefore it is reasonable that we refrain from baptizing a child until they are more likely to remember the experience and more fully embrace the commitment that is represented by this public declaration of faith.

3. Wait for Significance

Encouraging a child to wait until they are more mature reinforces the significance of baptism. This is especially true in a "me-oriented" culture that reinforces a mistaken notion that "if you want it, you can have it and you can have it now". Our hope is that as a child waits there will be a growing sense of anticipation as they look forward to following the Lord in the obedience of baptism. Such anticipation can add meaning and significance of the experience when they are eventually baptized.

⁹ Adapted from [Bethlehem Baptist Church](http://c4.atomicplaypen.com/sites/BBC/resources/images/44492.pdf). This section is used with permission. <http://c4.atomicplaypen.com/sites/BBC/resources/images/44492.pdf>

4. Wait for Maturity

The process for preparing a young person for baptism is designed to instruct and encourage young people in their faith. It is also designed to help parents and church leadership to discern the candidate's readiness for baptism. As it is, this process is a stretch for most eleven-year-olds and most children younger than this simply lack the maturity they need to satisfactorily complete the process. Moreover, baptism can be one of the experiences in a young person's life that mark the "coming of age" – the time when a person puts "childhood" behind and picks up the mantle of maturity.

Bibliography for Parents

Raising a family in the Lincoln-way area can be exciting but daunting. Children are members of our church community and at Missio Dei Church we desire to support parents as we raise our children in the gospel. One of the ways we can support and encourage one another at MDC is through the sharing of resources and experience. Here, we share some favorites. Whether you are new to parenthood or just need a new idea, we hope these suggestions help you to navigate a parent just a little bit better.

Andrews, Robert. *The Family, God's Weapon for Victory*. WinePress Publishers: Mukilteo: Washington, 1995.

Includes foundations of family life, husband and wife roles, and training and nurturing children

Dobson, James. *The New Dare to Discipline*. Tyndale House Publishers: Wheaton, Illinois. 1992.**

Practical advice on training and disciplining children.

Dobson, James. *The Strong-Willed Child*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Wheaton, Illinois. 1978.**

Strategies for dealing with strong-willed children.

Dobson, James. *Bringing Up Boys*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Wheaton, Illinois. 2001

Title is somewhat misleading; although includes advice on raising boys, it is basically a book on parenting; addresses the negative influence of our culture on children and a challenge to think question the "norm" and parent more intentionally.

Evans, Dr. Anthony T. *Guiding Your Family in a Misguided World: Preparing Your Kids to Live in a Secular Society*. Focus on the Family Pub.: Colorado Springs, Colorado. 1991.

Includes the purpose and foundation for families, faith nurturing, communication, and a section on how the church can help the family.

James, John Angell. *The Christian Father's Present to His Children*. Soli Deo Gloria Pub.: Morgan, Pa. 1993 (reprint from the 1853 edition).

A book of depth from the 19th century; developing "religious character" in your children

James, John Angell. *Addresses to Young Men*. Soli Deo Gloria Pub.: Morgan, Pa. 1995 (reprint from the 1860 edition).

More solid 19th century wisdom; guidance for young men

James, John Angell. *Female Piety*. Soli Deo Gloria Pub.: Morgan, Pa. 1999 (reprint from the 1860 edition).

A call to young women to pursue piety

Leman, Dr. Kevin. *Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours*. Fleming H. Revell Co.: Old Tappan, New York. 1984.

Instruction in "reality discipline" (guidance and action-oriented techniques)

Lewis, Robert. *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*. Focus on the Family Pub.: Colorado Springs, Colorado. 1997

"A father's role in guiding his son to authentic manhood"

Priolo, Lou. *Teach Them Diligently*. Timeless Texts: Woodruff, S.C. 2000

Teaches parents how to use the Bible for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness with their children.

Priolo, Lou. *The Heart of Anger*. Calvary Press: Amityville, NY. 1998

Rosemond, John. *Six-Point Plan For Raising Happy, Healthy Children*. Andrews and McMeel: Kansas City, Kansas. 1989.

Practical, common sense child rearing from a family psychologist; Rosemond advises parents to put the marriage first, expect children to obey, establish responsibility by assigning chores, not to be afraid to say "no" to children, eliminate unnecessary toys; and encourage creativity

Rosemond, John. *Making the Terrible Two's Terrific*. Andrews and McMeel: Kansas City, Kansas. 1993.

Rosemond guides parents through "toilet training, establishing good bedtime habits, developing an effective disciplinary style, controlling biting and other aggressive behaviors, and many other issues" with two-year-olds

Rosemond, John. *Parent Power!* Andrews and McMeel: Kansas City, Kansas. 1991.

Common-sense approach to raising children; basic principles of child rearing and practical advice for different stages of development and the specific issues connected with these different stages

Rosemond, John. *A Family of Value*. Andrews and McMeel: Kansas City, Kansas. 1995.

Rosemond advocates for traditional child rearing and the values it represents—"My aim is to unsettle those in the professional community who continue to prefer child-rearing rhetoric over reality; to expose that rhetoric for exactly what it is so that America's parents can understand the propaganda that's been shaping their attitudes and parenting behaviors; and lastly, to help America's families retrieve... once-cherished, now-discredited values"

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Rosemond, John. *Ending the Homework Hassle*. Andrews and McMeel: Kansas City, Missouri. 1990.

"Understanding, preventing, and solving school performance problems"; includes a wise, practical section on helping ADD children

Seel, David John. *Parenting without Perfection*. Navpress: Colorado Springs, Colorado. 2000.

"Christian parenting doesn't mean raising flawless kids—it means learning to treat your children as God treats you, focusing on influencing your children's beliefs rather than controlling their behavior. Presents 10 priorities that will help you introduce your children to genuine living in the Kingdom of God."; focuses on teens

Tripp, Ted. *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*. Shepherd Press: Wapwallopen. Pennsylvania. 1995.

Ted Tripp encourages parents to examine heart issues behind behavior; includes Biblical methods of communication, training and correction

Trumbull, H. Clay. *Hints on Child Training*. Great Expectations Book Co.: Eugene, Oregon. (Originally published in 1890).

Foundations for child training; includes subjects such as will-training, denying a child wisely, training a child to self-control, training a child not to tease, training a child's appetite, training a child's faith, training a child's amusements, training a child to courtesy, guiding a child in companionships, etc.

Weber, Stu. *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart*. Multnomah: Sisters, Oregon. 1997

Four pillars of manhood designed by God to be in balance—king, warrior, mentor, friend

Wilson, Nancy. *The Fruit of Her Hands*. Cannon Press: Moscow, Idaho. 1997.

The woman's role as a godly woman and a person of depth

Wilson, Doug. *Reforming Marriage*. Canon Press: Moscow, Idaho, 1995. **

Describes godly marriages as flowing from an obedient heart; includes a theology of marriage and headship and authority; rather than address the “mere externals of marriage”, this book seeks to “understand the heart issues”

Liturgy for Infant Baptism

As the time of baptism of your children, you are asked to affirm that you believe in Jesus as your Savior and that you rely on him for the forgiveness of your sins. You also promise to teach your children about Jesus, to pray for your children and others, and to seek to grow in the faith. Furthermore, you promise to be an active participant in the life of Missio Dei Church, which includes faithful attendance at worship, being in fellowship with other believers, giving of yourself in service, offering prayers and gifts, and witnessing of your faith in word and deed.

N _____, please testify of your faith and your commitment by responding to the following questions:

1. Do you accept the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ revealed in the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament as the only way to eternal life?
2. Do you acknowledge that you and (state child's name) are sinners, sinful by nature, but that by the grace of God alone your sins are forgiven and your old nature is put to death, so that you may be brought to newness of life and set apart as a member of the body of Christ?
3. Do you promise to pray for your child, for yourself, and for others, asking God's guidance in training (him/her) as together we seek to grow in knowledge and understanding of the faith?
4. Do you promise to show in your own person the joy of new life in Christ by active participation with (him/her) in the life of the Church and by faithful attendance to worship, service, and the offering of prayers and gifts, to the glory of God?
5. Have you so kept the vow you made before God with your previous child(ren) that you can make this vow with a sincere and clear conscious?

Response: I do

Congregation stands

1. Do you as a member of the congregation welcome this child into the community of faith?
2. Will you seek to intentionally disciple him/her because of your own commitment to Jesus by your own words and deeds?
3. Will you support the educational and youth ministries of the church so that together we can disciple the children in faith?
4. Will you pray for the children of the church?

If so, will you answer saying, "I will."

N _____, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.