

BAPTISM

PREAMBLE

This paper aims to provide a theological and rational position for infant baptism practiced at Church@thepeak. It is hoped it will help provide greater understanding to those who are unsure or unconvinced of the practice of infant baptism.

The topic of baptism (who and how) has caused divisions among Christians for many centuries. Sometimes it has divided rightly, because sometimes the different views of baptism have reflected different gospels. This is most evident between Catholic thinking on baptism and evangelical thinking.

Officially for Catholics, baptism is understood to actually wash away original sin and it does this irrespective of the presence of faith. This is, of course a different understanding of the gospel and is rightly rejected. However, among evangelicals, the differences between those who hold to infant baptism (reformed churches) and those who hold to believer's baptism (e.g. Baptist churches) are not those of a different gospel but rather grow out of a different understanding of the relationship between the old and new covenants. This is not always evident because many are simply unaware of the reformed position or have been given an overly simplistic version of it, which creates the impression the only reason reformed theologians support infant baptism is because they love their traditions. In some cases, this may certainly be so. But it is also true that many Baptists hold to their view on the basis of their own traditions. None of us are completely untainted by our traditions. However, Reformed theology is passionately committed to 'scripture alone' and so seeks to develop a theology of baptism out of the Scriptures.

It is my hope that a greater understanding of the reformed evangelical position of infant baptism would not only facilitate gospel unity among Christian brothers and sisters but would perhaps even persuade some that there is more to infant baptism than they had previously been led to believe.

SUMMARY

1. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward (spiritual) reality. It is sign of the spiritual cleansing that happens when a person is in Christ, and mark of inclusion in the community of faith.
2. Baptism is not a salvation issue and so ought not be an issue we divide over.
3. The NT is silent on both believer and infant baptism. That is, there is no command as to when a person ought to be baptised.
4. While baptising infants of Christian parent(s) is appropriate, it is not appropriate if neither parent is practicing believer.

5. Baptism of infants was normal practice among the early church.
6. The NT treats children of Christian parents as believers
Jesus says children are members of the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10:14), and Paul addresses children as believers who are 'in the Lord' (Eph 6:1).
7. The parallel between circumcision and baptism
Colossians 2:11-12 suggests that just as circumcision was the sign of belonging to the old covenant community, so baptism is the sign of belonging to the new covenant community.
8. The nature of households in the Bible
Just as it was normal practice for the whole household to receive the covenant sign of circumcision in the OT (Gen 17:9-14), this practice continued in the NT, where the entire household received the covenant sign of baptism (Acts 11:14; 16:15; 31-33).
9. Children of believers are included in God's covenant promises
Children in the OT and NT are inheritors of all the blessings that belong to God's people. They are already in the covenant community. While they still need to be disciplined, we baptise them as one who is in the covenant community and encourage them as they grow to remain in and keep choosing to walk with Christ.
10. Baptism is not a mark of God's election
Baptism is not a mark that a person is one of God's elect. This is true for both adult and child alike. For as we see in the OT, while all received the sign of circumcision and are part of the covenant community, many rebelled and are not saved. For "Not all Israel, is Israel" (Rom 9:6). Therefore, we baptise children of believers because they are part of the community of faith, promising to raise them as disciples of Jesus who share in all God's promises, but not presuming to be declaring them to be part of God's elect.
11. Baptism as a sign of God's work, not ours
Many make the mistake of thinking baptism is a sign that "I have decided" to choose God, and therefore infant baptism is wrong because they cannot decide for themselves. However, this is incorrect. Baptism is not a sign of our faith or commitment toward God, but of God's pledge toward us. Baptism is not about us, it's about God. We are not committing to God in baptism; rather, through baptism we are signifying God's promise to cleanse us from sin through Jesus' death and resurrection.
12. Baptising infants is consistent with how Christians raise their children
Christian parents raise their children as disciples of Jesus – to read the Bible, pray, share Jesus with friends etc. Given Christians raise their children as disciples, they ought to be baptised as a mark of being a disciple of Jesus.

BACKGROUND

Firstly, it needs to be recognised that right from beginning the baptism of infants was normal practice among the early church. The earliest reference to infant baptism was by Origen (185–c.254) who mentions infant baptism as traditional and customary. While Tertullian writing c.198–203 mentions that it was customary to baptise infants, with sponsors speaking on their behalf. The Apostolic Tradition, sometimes attributed to Hippolytus of Rome (died 235), describes how to perform the ceremony of baptism; it states that children were baptised first, and if any of them could not answer for themselves, their parents or someone else from their family was to answer for them. Origen testifies that in his days infant baptism was in general use. Cyprian, agreeing with the Council of Carthage held in 256, defended the view that infant baptism should not be delayed till the eighth day but already administered on the second or third after birth. Augustine (354–430) defended baptism in his disputes with Pelagius. Therefore, from at least the 3rd century onward, Christians baptised infants as standard practice.

It wasn't until the Reformation of the 16th century that baptism of believers started to be practiced more widely. It was the Anabaptists that really drove this movement. Anabaptists rejected infant baptism as practiced in the Lutheran and Reformed churches. They believed that these churches either had been corrupted or had not separated themselves fully from what the Anabaptists considered to be errors of the Roman Catholic Church. Anabaptists, therefore, urged their followers to be baptised as conscious disciples of Christ.

The push by the Anabaptists and those that followed in their tradition, arose from seeing the abuses of the state church, where every member of that state was baptised – whether or not they were professing faith or not. This drove the Anabaptists to insist on re-baptizing those who expressed repentance and faith and therefore differentiating true believers from cultural Christians.

This undisciplined practice of infant baptism continues to plague the church today. Many churches continue to baptise infants, regardless of the faith of the parents. This is often seen in those denominations where cultural Christianity or nominal faith is expressed. As a result, baptism is either seen as a religious rite that make the child 'right' before God. Or it is seen as 'spiritual insurance policy' for nominal Christians who want to make sure their child is right with God 'just in case.'

Understandably, this undisciplined approach to infant baptism, drove (and continues to drive) many Christians against the practice and advocate for believer baptism instead. That is, that baptism should only be applied to those who express 'repentance and faith'.

This of course is an admirable aim. It is right to react against these unhelpful traditions and practices. But in doing so, switching to the practice of believer baptism sets about to cure a real and terrible problem, with the wrong solution.

In other words, it ends up 'throwing out the baby with the bath water.' [pardon the pun!]

Today, the majority of traditional denominations practice infant baptism, including Anglican, Presbyterian, Orthodox and Uniting churches, while Baptist and Pentecostal churches practice believer's baptism.

BAPTISM AT CHURCH@THEPEAK

Church@thepeak is an Anglican church, and therefore we practice infant baptism. But not just because it is part of our articles of faith (The 39 Articles), but because I believe it is theologically grounded and supported from the scriptures. The rest of this paper will aim to outline the theological foundation for infant baptism.

However, before doing that, it is good to remember the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:17 – *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.* Paul's point to the Corinthians is, baptism is a secondary issue compared to preaching and proclaiming the gospel and seeing people brought into God's eternal kingdom.

And so yes, it ought to be discussed and debated. However, we must not break fellowship because we arrive at different conclusions. There are members of C@P who hold different positions – and that is okay. Our unity is not found in our position on baptism, our unity is in Christ and the gospel.

Therefore, we must always continue to keep the 'main thing', the 'main thing.' We must continue to focus on our mission *'to live to be and make disciples of Jesus'*; and *'seeing all of Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus.'*

BIBLE'S SILENCE

It is important to recognise the Bible's silence on **both believer and infant baptism**. That is, while it is true there is no direct command in the scriptures to baptise infants, it is equally true that there is no command to wait for the children to reach a certain age before they are baptised.

While there are many examples in the NT of adults being baptised, it needs to be recognised that these examples cannot be taken as a command (i.e., we must only baptise adults). They are descriptive, not prescriptive. It needs to be recognised that as we read the New Testament, we only see first generation believers as they are converted from paganism to following Jesus. The New Testament does not record what that generation does with their children. There is no clear record of them baptising their children. Similarly, there is no record of them waiting until their children were teenagers or adults before deciding they were old enough before being baptised.

Therefore, if we insist on baptising children when they reach a certain age we do so without any explicit and direct command from the Bible. The same of course can be said with regard to the baptism of infants.

The point is the Bible is silent on both positions. Therefore, any position we develop and practice must be based on theological principles drawn from across the scriptures. And therefore, whatever position we hold to, we must do so with an open hand and humility.

Let me now offer some of the factors that have encouraged many of the great leaders of the Christian church to adopt the practice of infant baptism down through the centuries (Luther, Calvin, Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards, JI Packer, John Stott. etc)

BAPTISM IN NEW TESTAMENT

The starting point for baptism is Jesus' Great Commission to the disciples (Matt 28:19), which commands that baptism is part of the practice of 'making disciples.' The church has recognised this as one of the key sacraments of the Christian faith.¹

A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward reality. Thus, the ceremonial washing (whether by immersion or sprinkling) is a sign that signifies inward cleansing and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 6:11) when they are made regenerate by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14) and put their trust in Jesus.

Baptism is also a mark of inclusion in the community of faith. When a person comes to faith, their conversion is followed by baptism as a sign they are members of the covenant community (i.e., the church) (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38-41).

While Jesus commands baptism, it is not necessary for salvation. However, there is a baptism that is necessary for salvation, and that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament teaches that believers are saved *by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (Eph 2:1-10)*. This is a work of the Holy Spirit who regenerates the soul and unites us to Christ by faith (John 3:3, 5; 1 Cor 2:10-14)

And so, it is possible for a person to have been baptised with water and not baptised by the Holy Spirit, and therefore not be saved. Likewise, it is just as possible to have never been baptised with water and yet have been baptised with the Holy Spirit. We see an example of this of the thief on the cross who was saved just prior to his death, and yet was not baptised with water.

¹ Protestant churches recognise Lord's supper and baptism as sacraments, while the Catholic Church adds to these – Confirmation, Confession, Ordination, Marriage, Last Rites

DIFFICULTIES WITH BELIEVER-BAPTISM

While it is appealing to some to wait until our children are adults before baptising them, it is important to realise that if this practice is adopted, a number of significant complications arise.

The first is that it departs from the normal practice in the New Testament of baptising people immediately upon conversion. There is significant divergence from the biblical pattern observed in the New Testament, when children of believers are not baptised until they reach an arbitrary age when it is felt the child is mature enough to follow Jesus. At what point did the child become a believer? Almost certainly it was well before (possibly years) before their baptism.

The implication of this, is that believer's baptism places a limit to God's grace in the life of the child who has not yet reached the age of discretion. God's grace, however, knows no such boundaries (Psalm 22:9-10; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15). Though they cannot actually repent and believe (i.e., express faith), they can be regenerate and thereby receive the capacity to believe. It's worth remembering that ***faith is the fruit of regeneration, not the cause of it***. And regeneration is wrought entirely by the sovereign and gracious act of God.

Secondly, it is inconsistent with how we raise our children. That is, believers tend to raise their children to know and trust in Jesus. As every Christian parent knows, our children simply do not fit into the same categories of unbelieving adults being evangelised and called to repentance and faith. If we were to insist that children raised in our families were to be treated in this consistent manner, then we would be wrong to teach them to pray, or at least wrong to encourage them to pray until they are 'converted' and baptised.

The fact is, as Christian parents we treat our children as believers since we teach them to pray, teach them to evangelise their friends, encourage them to trust God in difficult times, and urge them to live lives that honour Christ – all of which is only appropriate for those who know Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The point is not to stop this practice. There is very good reason for it in places like the household tables of Ephesians and Colossians. There, children of believers are addressed as if they are responsible followers of Christ (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20). In fact, children are addressed in Ephesians 6:1 as those '*in the Lord*' and are therefore considered as part of '*the saints*' that Paul refers to in Ephesians 1:1.²

² On the phrase, 'in the Lord', one commentator says: 'the obedience of Christian children to their parents is all of a piece of their submission to Christ (5:21): the additional motivating phrase 'in the Lord', is virtually synonymous with 'as to the Lord' or 'as to Christ' (5:22; 6:5) and indicates that their obedience is part of their Christian discipleship. It is not rendered simply because of their parents' greater authority or status.' If children are considered and treated as 'saints' and 'in the Lord', then it is inappropriate that baptism be withheld from them as though they are not yet followers of Jesus and part of God's covenant family. Or to put it another way, it is highly odd and inconsistent, that we withhold baptism from those that we consider and treat as followers of Christ.

This understanding of children by the Apostle Paul is consistent with the way Jesus spoke of and welcomed children. In Mark 10:14 Jesus says, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*"³ This further suggests children are to be considered as part of the covenant community and the people of God.

Therefore, by withholding baptism until the child is older, it implies that the faith of a child is somehow inadequate, or worse that they are not yet a disciple of Jesus.

The third issue with believer baptism is the implication that the believer has 'chosen' God, rather than the biblical truth which is, God chooses us. (Eph 1:4-5, 11; Rom 8:30). Yes, we must respond to God's calling in repentance and faith, but our response is only possible because God initiates our salvation. To insist that baptism must only be done once a child reaches an age of discernment, makes salvation a decision of the individual. This way of thinking is often seen in the slogans on t-shirts worn at baptism saying, '*I have decided.*' That is, waiting until a person can self-articulate their faith makes it the believer's decision. This is contrary to our doctrine of salvation.

WHY BAPTISE CHILDREN?

So how can we baptise children and still uphold that we are saved by faith?

The first is the continuity of households between the Old Testament and New Testament. The second, which is tightly linked to our understanding of households, is our theological understanding of covenant. Let me unpack each of these here.

THE NATURE OF HOUSEHOLDS

In the Old Testament, the word household deliberately expressed the idea of family solidarity in any spiritual choice and clearly included infants. Note for example the way God saved Noah and *his household* (Gen 7:1); or Israel (Jacob) and his *household* were saved through Joseph (Gen 45:11); or how each *household* was saved by the blood of the lamb during the Passover (Ex 12), or the promises to Abraham which included his children (Gen 17:9-10). In each case the *household* encompassed any and all who lived under the roof – whether adult or infant.

We see a similar occurrence in the New Testament with the conversion and baptism of Cornelius in Acts 10-11. Prior to his conversion, we are told that Cornelius was a Roman centurion who was '*a devout man who feared God with all*

³ Matthew 19:14; Luke 18:16

his household, ... and prayed continually to God.' (Acts 10:1-2). In other words, he and his family were Gentiles living under the Old Covenant.⁴

However, when Peter brings Cornelius the message of the gospel (New Covenant), it was a word of salvation to him "*and **all** his household*" (Acts 11:14). In other words, the inclusion of the household in the spiritual blessings, which existed under the Old Covenant, continued under the New Covenant. It seems to suggest there is continuity between the way the household is understood in the Old Testament and here in Acts. That is, children were considered and were identified with their parents as participants in the blessings of the New Covenant. This is not to suggest that they therefore were necessarily regenerate. But it must be remembered that baptism never guarantees that for adult or child.

As in the past, so now in the present and future, God deals with families.

THE MEANING OF COVENANT

Our confidence in God working in and through the believer's *household*, stems from the biblical understanding of covenant which reminds us that our salvation is founded upon the promises of God, the one who promises to be God to us and to our children. This was true of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and their families etc. as outlined above.

Children in the Old Testament were inheritors of all the blessings that belonged to Israel. Circumcision set them apart as God's children, separate from the world, bearing the sign of national identity, as inheritors of the faith of Abraham.

Under the New Covenant, the inclusion of the children of believers in the family of God continues (Acts 2:39), though now the sign of the covenant is no longer circumcision, but baptism (Col 2:11-12). The blessing of salvation equally belongs to such children under both the Old and the New Covenant.

To be sure such children need to be disciplined about what it means to be a member of the covenant community, but they do not need evangelising any more than Christian adults need evangelising. They are already holy (1 Cor 7:14).

The children of unbelievers, on the other hand, are without salvation and without Christ. Of course, it may please God to save some who died in infancy, but we have no warrant from Scripture to declare that such children are saved. However, if a child of the covenant dies in infancy, then we have good warrant from Scripture to declare that the child is with Christ (2 Samuel 12:23). They are not in a halfway house until the age of discernment. Rather, they are Christians who are part of the covenant people of God and their baptism is a sign confirming that is so.

⁴ Also when Zacchaeus believes, Jesus says that salvation has come to his house (Luke 19:9); along with the head of the family, the entire household is saved (Acts 16:31,34); and entire households believe and are baptised (Acts 16:15; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16)

This does not mean children of believers will live their lives always assured they are forgiven, simply because they're born to believers. Over time they must evidence the genuineness of covenant membership by their mature expression of repentance and faith (as all those who are baptised must as well). But still, in those early years, they are part of the covenant community. They are to be raised as those who enjoy forgiveness and urged to continue in the faith every day.

In this way the children of believers are very different from unbelievers, and the choices they make as they mature are also very different. For a non-Christian to become a Christian, they must choose to enter into the covenant community by their decision to put their faith in Christ. They were outside of his community and now they step in. Baptism of course functioned in the New Testament as a sign of this covenant entry.

The child raised in the home of believers has a very different choice to make. His or her choice will be to stay in or depart from the covenant community as they grow. They are in the community of faith by virtue of their birth into a family who themselves are in the covenant community already. Our common practice of child rearing confirms we believe this, since we treat our young children as young Christians who need to mature, rather than as non-believers who need to be converted.

Now both non-believer and infant have choices to make, but they are very different, and baptising infants of believers affirms this different choice. We mark them as in the covenant community and encourage them as they grow to remain in and keep choosing to walk with Christ.

RAISING CHILDREN AS CHRISTIANS, NOT UNBELIEVERS TO BE CONVERTED

Raising children as Christians is not an extraordinary concept. Australian citizens raise Australian-born children. It is not that their children need to *become* Australian – they *are* Australian. They don't have to participate in a citizenship ceremony when they turn 18! None-the-less, their parents will rightly impart on them what it means to *be* Australian. They teach them the Australian national anthem, the colours of our Olympic team, the significance of ANZAC Day, Australian values etc.

Likewise, the responsibility of Christian parents is to train up their children in the fear and knowledge of the Lord (Eph 6:4; Prov 22:6). That is, they are to raise their children to know and follow Jesus as their king, and disciple them accordingly, helping them to see and understand what it means to be one who follows Jesus. Thus, we can teach our children from the earliest age to pray the Lord's Prayer and say "*Our Father in heaven...*", knowing that the opening words are true for them, for God is their Father in Heaven who loves them and has forgiven them. We don't teach them to pray to 'Mummy and Daddy's Father in heaven.'

Christian parents teach their children to pray, tell others about Jesus, obey Jesus and his word, to honour Jesus, and trust in Jesus in difficult times. These are all things we do on the basis that they are disciples of Jesus. We don't do that with an unbeliever who is yet to put their trust in Jesus. Similarly, faithful parents teach their child the importance of repentance and faith, not as a means of entering into relationship with God, but as a reflection of the covenant relationship they are already in.

Given Christian parents tend to raise their children as disciples of Jesus, it is entirely appropriate they are baptised as a mark of their inclusion in the covenant community. To not baptise them says they are outsiders and not yet part of the community.

COVENANT COMMUNITY VS GOD'S ELECT

One of the key arguments against infant baptism is that experience demonstrates that some children of the covenant grow up rebellious and depart from the faith. Therefore, how can we claim that they are in Christ in the first place? This is a fair and reasonable objection that needs to be addressed. Yet it is not a new problem.

Consider Israel who were described as God's 'royal priesthood and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:6) and sons of God. All of the nation was saved by God through the Red Sea, all of them shared in the life-giving manna and water from the rock (Ex 16:35; 17:6), all of them were marked with the sign of covenant inclusion – circumcision (Josh 5:2-8). Yet 'God was not pleased with most of them.' (1 Cor 10:5). In other words, not all Israel were finally saved.

Covenant membership carries with it covenant responsibilities. Not all those who participated in covenant relationship with God are finally saved.

Here is God's election at work. We know that God has elected some to salvation and not all those who are in the covenant community are elect according to God's decrees. We see this constantly throughout the Bible with Cain, Esau, and Judas. Each of them, were all part of the covenant community, they participated in the sign of the covenant (circumcision/baptism), but ultimately, they we're not saved.

Yet, those who are faithful to the covenant must prove their election (2 Pet 1:10). However, the Bible still uses the language of salvation to describe all who are part of the covenant community, even though not all will be finally saved. The Old Testament gives clear expression to this distinction. For while Israel is described as a holy nation (Ex 19:6), not all within Israel are holy. In Paul's words, 'not all of Israel are Israel' (Rom 9:6).

In other words, the covenant community is not the same as those who will be saved at the last day.

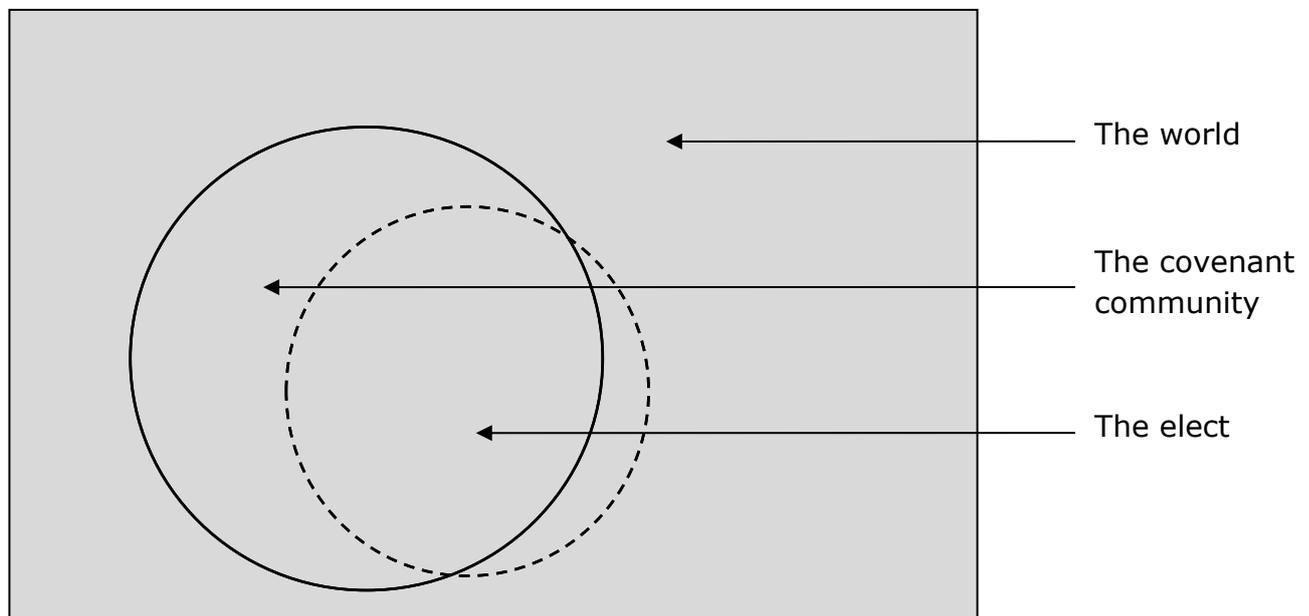
The same distinction applies under the New Covenant and is clearly seen in the examples of Judas (Luke 22:22; Acts 1:25) and Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-

24). Both were part of the covenant community, yet both were shown not to be part of God's elect. They were fruitless branches (John 15:1-8). Those branches which do not bear fruit are cut off and burnt. Yet Jesus describes them as branches in union with the vine before they are taken away. Elsewhere Jesus teaches there is chaff and weeds among the wheat (Matthew 3:12; 13:25-30); and goats among the sheep (Matthew 25:32-33) which will only be separated at the last day.

Therefore, humanly speaking we are not able to discern who is elect and who is not. Only God does that. All we (the church) can discern is who is part of the covenant community / the church which includes those adults who have converted and expressed faith in Christ, and those children of believers being raised as disciples of Christ. Each are marked as members of the church (covenant community) by baptism and their willingness to live their lives in accordance with the commandments of Christ (Matt 28:19-20).

Of course, covenant membership implies covenant responsibilities. As in the Old Testament the disobedient were cut off from God's people, so it is in the New Testament (Matthew 18:15-17). Children who grow up in the covenant community are to live in light of the gospel and the great salvation that Jesus has won for them. Defection from the covenant is a possibility, and this is true not only for covenant children but also for those converted in adult life.

We can diagram this understanding in the following way:



The boundary markers for the covenant people are clear because we know who is 'in' the covenant community - they are the baptised. Hence the unbroken circumference in the diagram. However, the boundary markers of those who are elect according to God's decrees are unknown to us, and we cannot know with

certainty who is elect and who is not. Hence the broken circumference in the diagram.

Therefore, it is perfectly legitimate to describe covenant children as being 'in Christ', just as it is to describe an adult who believes and is baptized as being 'in Christ'. The possibility that they may leave the covenant community does not prevent us from describing them as members of the covenant community while they remain. For we can never know *categorically* that anyone is in the kingdom, whether they be children or adults. Yet this does not mean that we cannot describe people as Christians just because we do not know whether or not they are elect according to God's decrees.

Once we understand that baptism is never a declaration of a person's election (whether child or adult) it frees us to legitimately baptise infants of believing parents because those children will be raised as disciples of Christ and be active members of the covenant community. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that they receive the sign that marks them as a member the covenant community.

Note, we are not saying the baptised child is regenerate before or at their baptism. While God can and does act graciously in regenerating a child's heart, even before they are born (Psalm 22:9-10; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15), regeneration may happen before, during, or even a great many years after baptism.

CONCLUSION

Given the biblical principles of covenant and election; given the practice of the early church, and given the difficulties associated with believer baptism, I am strongly inclined to the reformed position of baptising infants of believing parents (or parent).

Of course, I want to hold tightly to the clear biblical idea that salvation is for those who personally respond to the gospel. However, it is just as important to affirm and uphold the truth that salvation **is first and foremost a response to the initiative of a promise making God**. A pattern of baptism that declares that truth I think is critical and I'm afraid that the typical Baptist pattern of waiting until a child reaches a certain age, not only lacks any direct command of scripture, but is different to the biblical pattern of baptism we do see (since conversion is very much separated from baptism), and creates an unhelpful emphasis upon human response as the critical condition for salvation.

By sensitively practicing infant baptism we say to our children *"we mark you as a member of the community of Christ's people as a sign that God's grace comes before your response to him. Christ died for you before you were born. He has graciously put you in a family of believers. He has given you his word and a church community to point you to Jesus. And so, we welcome you into God's family and pray that you will grow to love the one who's given himself to you and that every day you will choose to stay in the community of faith by growing in faith yourself."*